



BUTTERFLY BALLADS

BY
Helen Atteridge

with
illustrations

by
Gordon Browne
and others





Rudolf.

March 1900.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

Butterfly Ballads

and

Stories in Rhyme

by

Helen Atteridge

with

* Illustrations *

by

Gordon Browne®

Louis Wain

and others



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BUTTERFLY BALLADS

Ethelinda Gray

O GENTLE READER, if you choose
This doleful tale to hear,
Begin to shiver in your shoes,
And drop the briny tear.
Prepare your pocket-handkerchief
Some comfortable way,
And you shall weep—but not too loud!—
For Ethelinda Gray.

She was a dream of loveliness,
And sat in a glass case,
And all her golden curls were loose
About her pretty face.
A little maiden took her home,
And dressed her up in white,
And kissed and talked to her all day,
And cuddled her all night.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

And said, "My Ethelinda Gray,
 I love you, I declare;
 Your cheeks are pink, your eyes are blue—
 As blue as china ware.
 I love your little painted shoes—
 They're prettier than leather;
 I love your little waxen hands,
 With fingers stuck together."



So Ethelinda Gray at meals
 Was close to Polly's
 side.

"I wish, my sweet, that you
 could eat:
 You can't—I've tried and
 tried."

And, all neglected and
 alone,

An older friend was by;
 His heart was heavy as a stone,
 A tear was in his eye.

Poor Bruno! creeping far away,
 He sat behind the door,
 And sullenly he wagged his tail,
 And mopped it on the floor.

And black and blacker grew his heart;
The jealous tail he swung,
And panted for Eth'linda's bran
With wistful eyes and tongue.

Then Polly, in a fairy book,
Read by the fire all day.

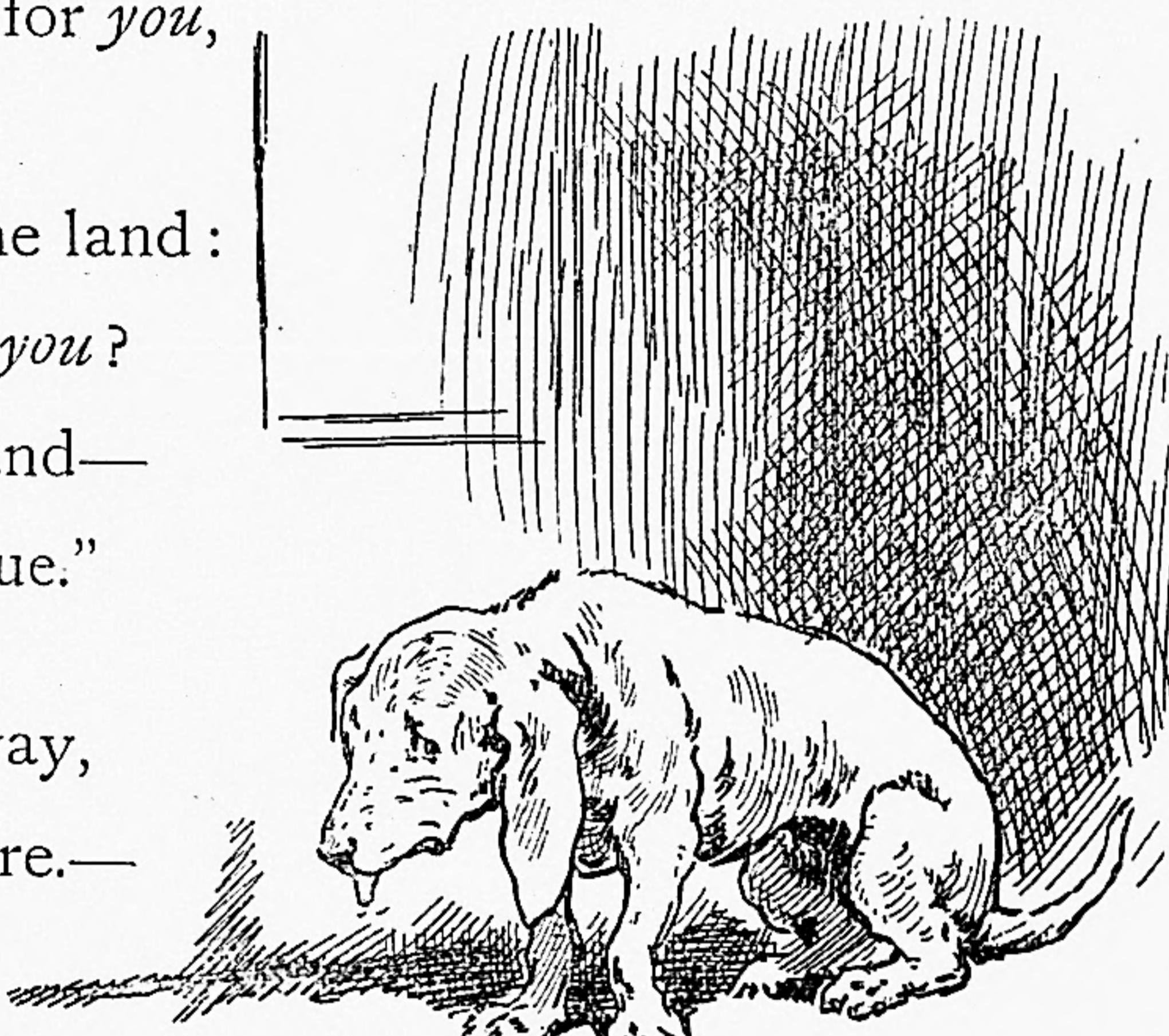
"What if the fairies came for *you*,
My Ethelinda Gray?

They stole the prettiest in the land:
Now what if they stole *you*?
It's only fun, you understand—
Those tales are never true."

The little maiden went away,
And left the beauty there.—
Make ready now! your
flesh shall creep,
And up will stand your hair!

The jealous dog, the monster, came
And dragged her by the head;
And when she tumbled from his grasp,
He caught her heels instead.

He rolled her down the stony steps,
He trotted round the yard,
He shook her up, he shook her down,
He shook her very hard.



BUTTERFLY BALLADS

Escaping by an open door,
 Off to the woods he ran :
 And all the path was peppered o'er
 With one long stream of bran.

He flung her in the wintry grass,
 As he would fling a bone ;

He left her in the woodland wild :
 Left her to die alone.

He met his master down the road,
 And frisked with merry paws ;
 But Polly's brother started back,
 For bran was on his jaws !



“ Monster ! thou hast devoured the
 doll ! ”

Young Robin shrieked aloud ;
 But on the road he shrieked
 no more,

Lest he might draw a crowd.

But, tracing slow the stream of bran,
 He went the woodland way,
 Where in the twilight drear he saw
 Poor Ethelinda Gray.

And then the wicked dog sat down,
 And raised his nose in air,

And howled a very dismal howl—

“I’m jealous! I don’t care!”

And Robin stooped to pat his head—

“Don’t cry, my faithful hound;

Let us not tell this gruesome deed,

But hide her in the ground.”

So Robin dug a little grave

For Ethelinda’s bones,

And heaped the dead leaves over it,

And decked it round with stones.

Then guilty boy and dog went
home,

Nor said a word to Poll:
One hung his head and one
his tail,

When all day long they heard
her wail—

“The fairies stole my doll!”

And often Bruno starts in sleep,

And groans and shakes his paws:

It may be Ethelinda’s form

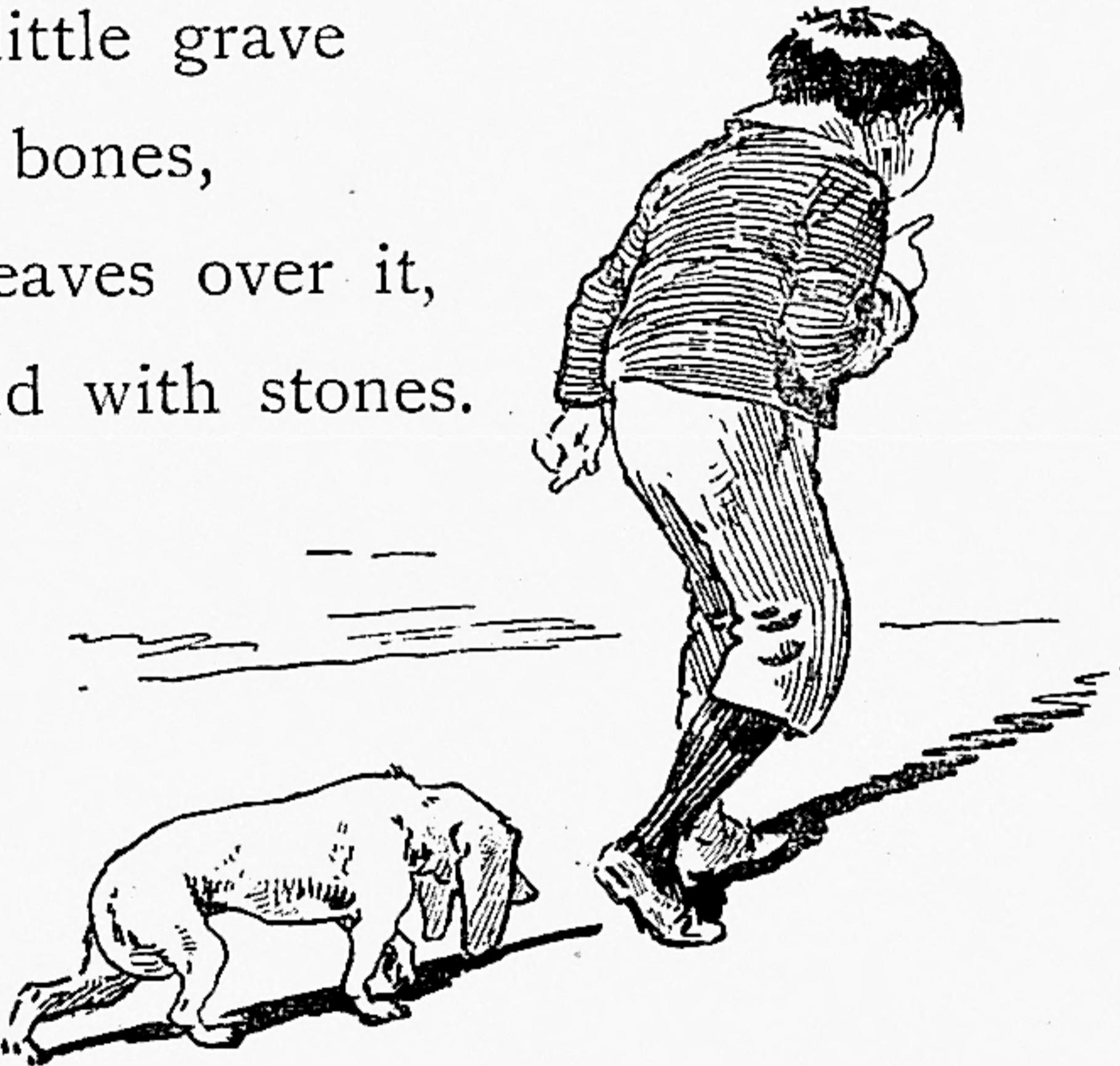
That is the awful cause.

And Robin tumbles through his bed,

Or so at least it seems,

When Ethelinda, shedding bran,

Comes dancing through his dreams.



Two Little Milkmaids

Two little milkmaids, merry and gay;
Two little dogs running out to play:
Down through the fields they took their way,
In the sparkling grass of the early day.



Two little milkmaids and two little pails;
Two little dogs wagging two little tails;
Sun-bonnets fluttered like pretty white sails:
They danced over pathways and climbed over rails.

Two little maids, and the cows were but two.
The maids tramped along in the grass and the dew;

The cows did their best to call out “Bulaboo!”
Which perhaps, in their language, is “How do you do?”

Never were milkmaids sweeter than those:
Their gowns were all gathered, the pink of the rose;
Their cheeks were like cherries; they turned out their toes;
And their sashes were tied in most beautiful bows.

Two little milkmaids—plenty to say—
Two little friends with one birthday.
Work this morning—afterwards play!
The money for milk shall be theirs to-day.

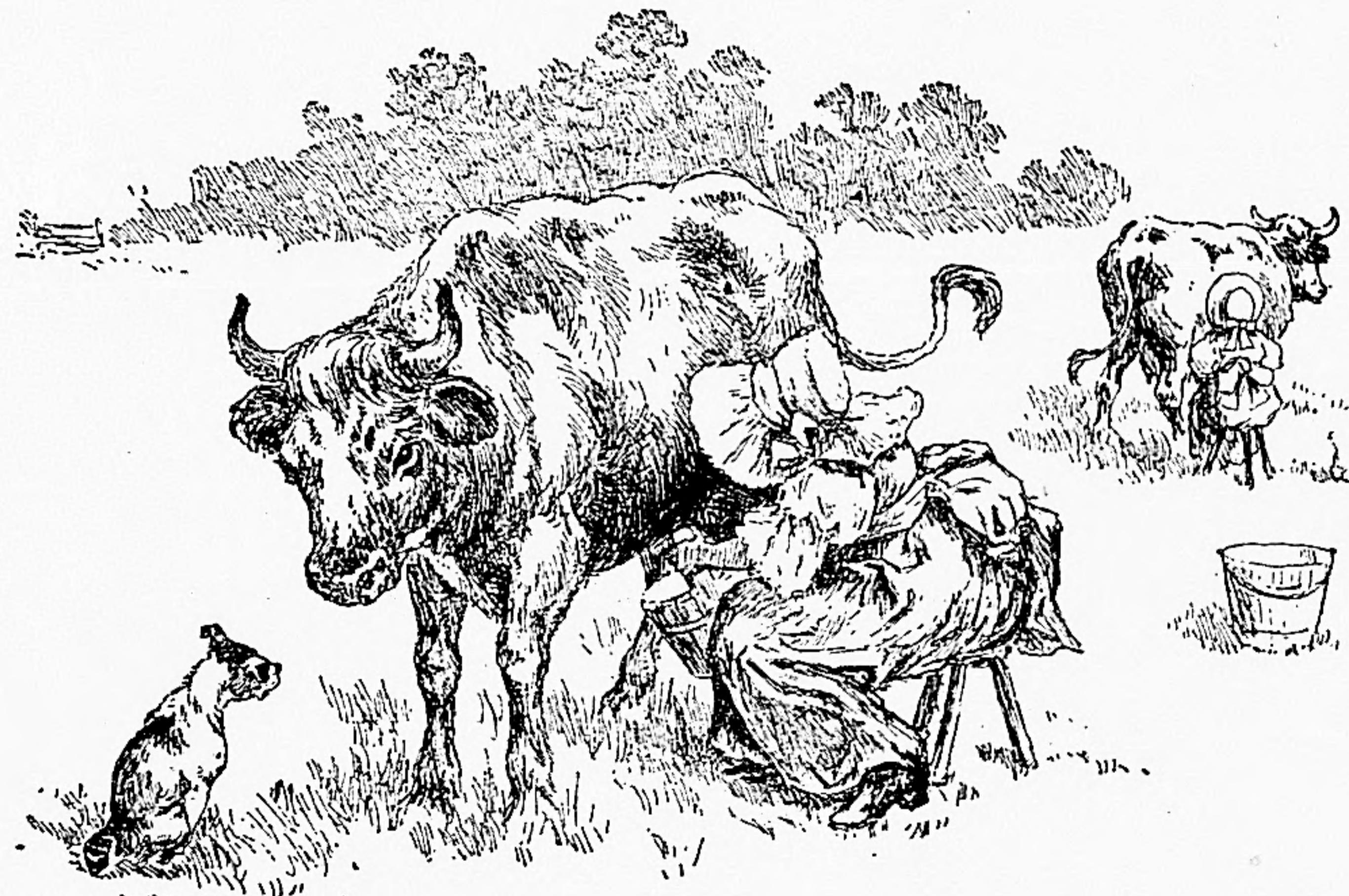
Peggs said to Pattie, and Pattie to Peggs,
“We shall buy a fat chicken, and sell all its eggs.
For eggs at the Castle her Ladyship begs,
And soon we can buy something nice on four legs.

“We could get in the market a very thin sheep,
And gather fresh clover all day for its keep,
And sell it off fat, and go on with a leap,
To buy a young calf—second-hand, you know, cheap.

“The calf would grow into a very big cow,
Profits on profits the milk would allow—
A neat little farm, a man, and a plough—
Our fortune is made, do you see, Pattie, now?”

"Our fortune is made!"—"Oh yes!" and "Oh yes!"
"Satin and silk shall be every-day dress,
We shall ride upon donkeys like any princess,
And have twenty dozen of dolls—no less!"

They stopped and they laughed in each other's eyes,
Oh, but the village would get a surprise!



Pattie and Peggy felt ever so wise,
And their castles in air ran up to the skies.

They pitied the children that sat in school,
They called the cows from the reedy pool,
And each sat down on her milking-stool,
And milked the cows in the morning cool.

Two little maids sang a milking tune,
"Pattie and Peg will have money soon—

Ladies in silk with a silver spoon,
Donkeys and dolls and a toy balloon!"

A boy drew near in a smock-frock sack,
A boy with his hands behind his back;
For wasting time he had a knack,
And so his name was Idle Jack.

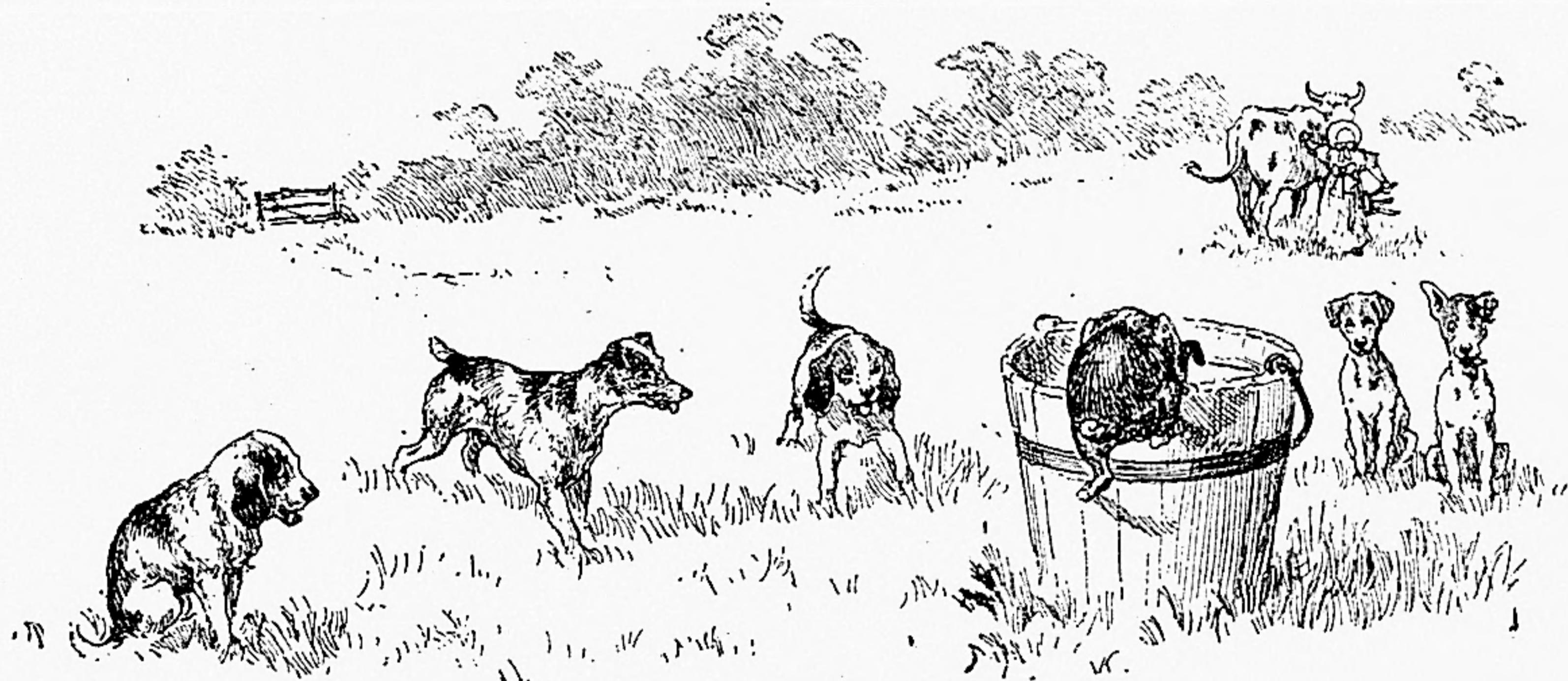


Pattie and Jack went frisking about—
Pattie and Jack, with a laugh and a shout.
One little milkmaid alone left out—
Poor little Peggy began to pout.

Pattie, playing with Idle Jack,
Climbed to ride on the old cow's back.
Peggy went sulking around the hay stack:
No one to play with—alas and alack!

Two little pails unguarded stood,
 Milking pails of the whitest wood.
 Two little dogs said, "We would if we could!"
 Their tongues were thirsty, it looked so good.

The farmyard dogs, with bark and scoff,
 Said, "Who's afraid?" and "Come, show off!"
 The pug said, "I can climb a trough";
 And he drank the milk till it made him cough.



Four little dogs went scrambling up,
 Greedy to plunge in so sweet a cup:
 Growling, "Get out!" and "Let *me* get a sup!"
 And "Mind you don't tumble, my darling pup!"

Pail number one upset—moreover,
 'Twas done by the milkmaids' terrier Rover;
 And the milkmaids' pug went rolling over
 Out of the milk and into the clover.

Pail number two stood full and white,
 Till six little dogs began to fight.
 Splash went the second pail, oh, what a sight!—
 Six little dogs in a terrible plight!



Far away from the dairy
 gate,
 Two little milkmaids
 mourned their fate.
 Peggy took care of her
 pail too late,
 Toby and Rover sat
 down to wait.

Impudent Rover got into the pail;
 On the stool sat the pug with the curly tail;
 In the middle stood Peggy, to weep
 and wail—
 Not a penn'orth of milk had the
 maids for sale.

No milk, no money, no silk,
 no sheep,
 No dozen of dolls, no
 donkey to keep:



Slowly home they had to creep,
 Bending their bonnets down to weep.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

First went Peggy, to point the track ;
Dogs came next—white, brown, and black ;
Pattie was sobbing along at the back,
With the pails, and the stools, and Idle Jack.

Cheer up ! little maidens. Cheer up ! say I.
After spilt milk it's no use to cry.
The castles in air fell down from the sky ;
But we all shall have honey for tea by and by.



"Slowly home they had to creep."

The Way to Fairyland

THEY went together, hand in hand,
Seeking the way to Fairyland.

He was seven, and she was six:
Those two were always up to tricks.

He took the dog, or the dog took him:
Rollo was twice as big as Jim.

Sissy had wrapped her doll in a shawl;
So, you see, they were four in all.

Trampity tramp! Oh, isn't it grand!
All setting off to Fairyland?

The rain came down, and, helter skelter,
They had to get under a tree for shelter.

They sat and leant against each other:
The girl was sad, the boy said, "Bother!"

Even the dog began to whine:
They sat so long in a doleful line.

The doll was patient all the while,
And smiled with an unchanging smile.

Till suddenly a rainbow spread
Across the skies—blue, yellow, red!

Quick! Where the rainbow meets the ground,
There is the land of the fairies found.

So hurry and hurry, hand in hand,
To the rainbow gates of Fairyland.

Long ago the rainbow faded:
The little pair were tired and jaded.

“Don’t lag behind!” cried Jim to Rollo:
“You must take care of us, and follow.”

“Don’t go to sleep,” said sister Sis,
And shook her dolly with a kiss.

They would not stop, they would not play,
They never picked blackberries all the way.

Sadly at last they came to a stand,
Poor little pilgrims to Fairyland!

They asked a girl; she shook her head,
“I know no place of that name,” she said.

They asked a boy; he said, “If you please,
Will you give me that dog for a pound of cheese?”

So they went farther, and one and all
Stopped before a policeman tall.

“Policeman, policeman, send us, pray,
To Fairyland the nearest way.”

“Where do you come from?” he inquired.
“We don’t know where, we are so tired.

“Please tell us—don’t you understand?—
The way we should go to Fairyland.”

“I think,” he said, “that information
Can best be given at the station.

“Come along to our inspector; he,
Perhaps, will look in the Directory.”

The helmet led them down the street—
Four big paws and four little feet—

To a whitewashed room with benches and sand
They asked at the station for Fairyland.

“It takes a very long time to look
For fairy addresses in that big book.

“Wait, little lady; and wait, young sir:
Sit on the bench, and don’t you stir.

“Put dolly to sleep against the wall,
And the great big dog shall take care of you all.

Jim sat straight, for he was older,
But Sissy leant against his shoulder.

The dog lay down on the sanded floor,
And they all were asleep for an hour or more,

For they had wandered many a mile;
But the doll kept awake with a pleasant smile.

What was the rattle? The lamps were shining.
Whose was the carriage with velvet lining?

The homeward speed made the carriage shake,
Till the boy and girl were half awake.

And there was the dog on the opposite seat,
And the staring doll: her smile was sweet.

The two little wanderers homeward sped.
Supper, and candles—good-night!—go to bed!

For Fairyland's farther than Timbuctoo,
And China's Wall, and the Mountains Blue.

By paths of moonshine pilgrims go;
But they never take dollies and dogs—oh no!

The Lay of the Lady Florinda

THE lamplighter came, with his pole and his light—
He was lighting the gas, it was very near night ;
He was lighting the gas just outside in the square,
And the Lady Florinda sobbed, “Oh, I don’t care !”

And all through the city, his muffins to sell,
Went the muffin-man walking, and ringing his bell ;
And the nursery table was laid out for tea :
Said Lady Florinda, “Not any for me !”

The dear little sparrows, so cosy and brown,
Were shaking their feathers for couches of down,
And hiding by chimneys—the poor little things !—
And tucking their little heads under their wings.

But the Lady Florinda would *not* go to bed :
And “I won’t take my tea !” and “I *don’t* care !” she said.
She was seven years old, and she stood on a chair
To look out of the window and say, “I don’t care !”

For—was it not sad?—ever since she was out
The Lady Florinda had been in a pout:
The nurse would not stop Punch and Judy to see,
So she said, “I don’t care!” and “I won’t have my tea!”

The Lady Florinda has run up the stair,
And thrown off her pinafore down on a chair;
There was no one to speak to, so never she spoke,
But she put on her hat and her little white cloak.

The hat and the cloak were a beautiful white,
Not suited a bit to that hour of the night;
And she never looked down at her poor little toes:
She had only her slippers—red leather, with bows.

Oh! nobody knew, when she stole to the hall;
When she opened the door there was no one to call;
But the clock went on ticking—tick-tack and tick-tack,
And my lady ran out: will she ever come back?

My lady was seven, my lady was sweet,
And she trotted away down the gas-lighted street
In her little white cloak and her little white hat,
With the two little shoes going fast pit-a-pat.

“Oh! where’s Punch and Judy? Oh! where can it be?
They were somewhere down here: it was then half-past three.

Oh! where's Punch and Judy? 'Twas such a fine box,
With a drum and a whistle, and squeaking and knocks.

"Oh! where's Punch and Judy ('twas then half-past three),
With a lovely live Toby worth stopping to see?
He was such a nice Toby: he barked in the show."
Oh! how could she find them? Which way did they go?

The Lady Florinda has turned to the right,

She has turned to the left: she has lost
herself quite.

She flies through the crowd, along
this street and that:

Leaves one shoe in a puddle, and
loses her hat.



The people look round where the
shops are all bright,

As the gay little figure runs crying
with fright.

Oh, where will she run to, and what will she do,
With one foot in a stocking and one in a shoe?

The rain began pouring: all wet was her hair;
And she wanted her tea; and she really *did care*.
She sank on a doorstep—sat weeping aloud;
And round Lady Florinda there gathered a crowd.

They asked for her name, and her voice was so weak,
That she said, "Punch and Judy," and then could not
speak.

They asked for her dwelling, and why she was there;
And she said, "Punch and Judy," and wept in despair.

Meanwhile, in the Countess's house, far away,
They were weeping and wailing at close of the day:
The butler was crying,
 my Lord in a rage,
And my Lady distressed
 by the howls of the
page.

For they searched and
they called her, but all
was in vain—

The Lady Florinda comes
never again;

Oh, never again will she scream in a fret!

Oh, never again will her tea-cup upset!

Oh, never again—(or at least so they fear)—
Will the chairs be made sticky with marmalade smear!
And never again, in the dusk unawares,
Will they tread upon dolly and tumble downstairs!

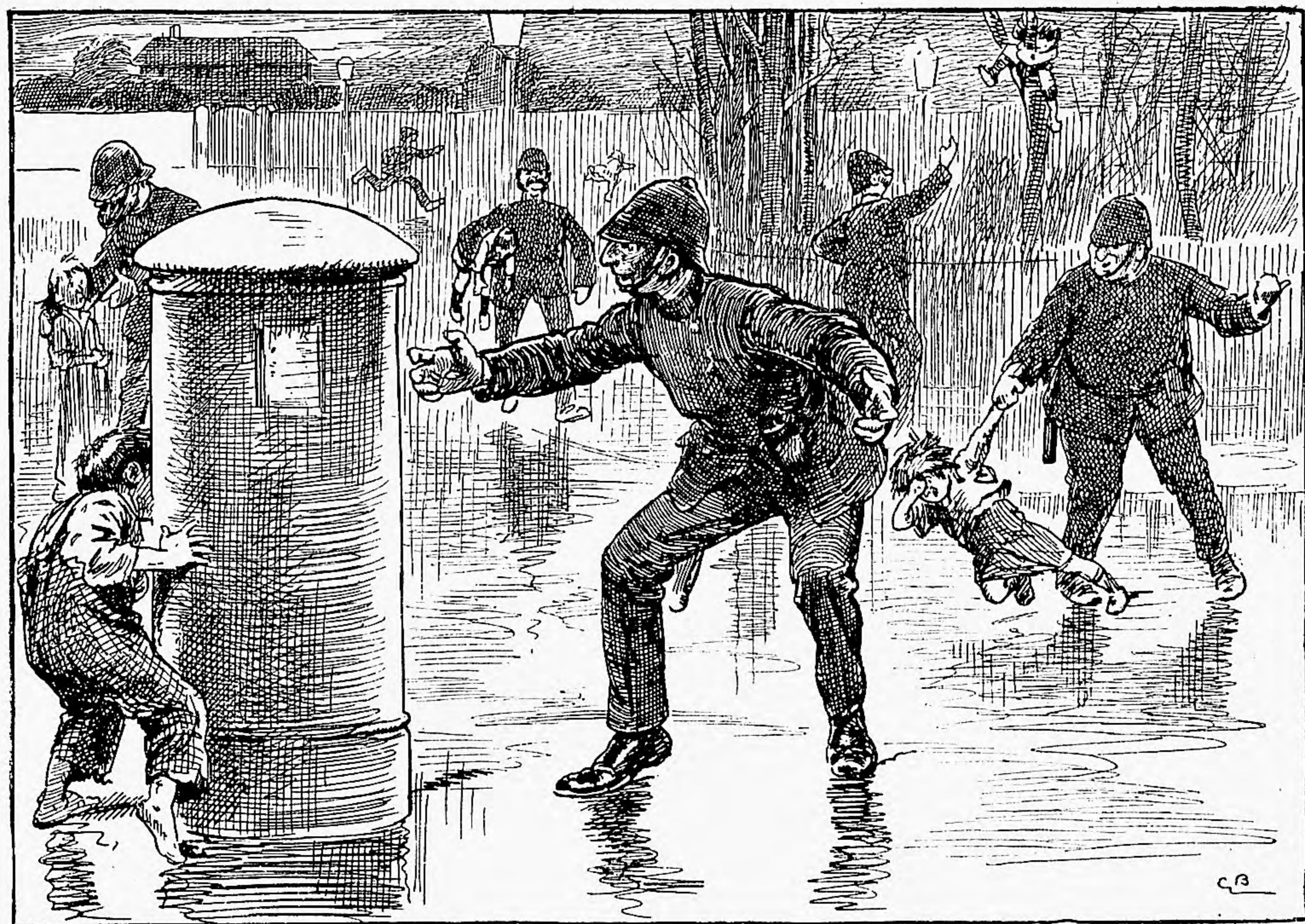


She is gone! She is lost! They went searching the square,
And found a policeman, and asked in despair:—
“Oh, gentle policeman! bring back to my Lord
A lost child of seven—There’s one pound reward!”

To the home of the Countess, from eight until ten,
Came children of seven with helmeted men;
The children were screaming, the children were wild,
For every policeman had captured a child.

They brought girls and boys: they brought thin ones and fat;
One brought a red shoe, and another a hat;
And a shilling was given to him with the shoe,
And the man with the hat was rewarded with two.

And at last came Florinda—a sovereign down
To the burly policeman that brought her from town.
She was black as a sweep, and as wet as could be,
And my Lord said, “How naughty—you cost one pound
three!”



"For every policeman had captured a child."

The Magic Slate

O LITTLE MAIDS who go to school
And say that six and three are eight,
And slowly plod from rule to rule,
Remember the Enchanted Slate.

For, oh! it may be very fine
A game of fox and goose to play,
And get three crosses in a line;
But there may come a doleful day—

A doleful day, when, tired and slow
You idle on, till comes your fate,
And down the pencilled path you go,
Like Maysie with the Magic Slate.

The day was hot; the sum was long;
And by the wall she idly sat,
And said, "I think the book is wrong:
It always, always comes to that!"

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

So, turning to the other side
 Of that old slate with wooden frame,
 She wondered at one yellow spot,
 And what it was, and why it came.

And round and round the yellow spot
 She drew a whirling line of white,
 Played puzzles, fox and geese—what not?



With her next neighbour on the right.

Then, tired of sums
 and tired of play,
 She sat and leant
 against the wall,
 Drew faces looking
 all one way,
 And curly dogs, and houses
 small.

The flies were buzzing on the
 pane;

The day was hot; the room was still.
 She walked along a pencil line,
 A chalky pathway, all downhill.

A pencil followed with a squeak,
 And Maysie shuddered and ran on—



A pencil's shoes should never
creak:

She looked behind her—it was
gone,

And she was all alone—alone.

The sky was grey, the land
was black,
No grass—but all a world of
stone,

With just one narrow chalky
track.

And then the little path of
white

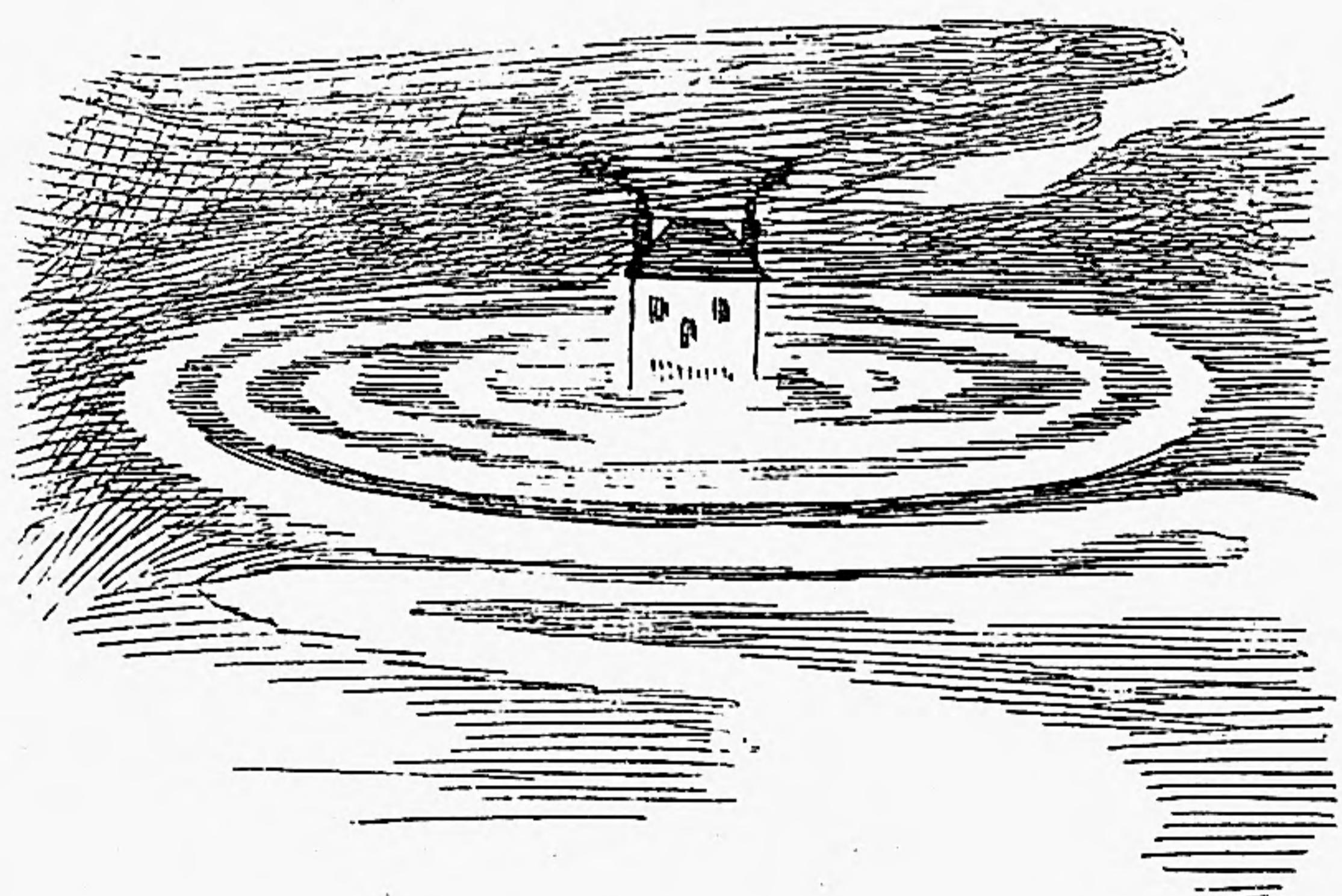
Went all in circles round and round,
And smaller every circle ran,
Until the yellow house was found—

The yellow house with
open door,

Where cake was spread,
and nuts and pears.

Said Maysie, "This I
read before:

It is the story of Three
Bears."



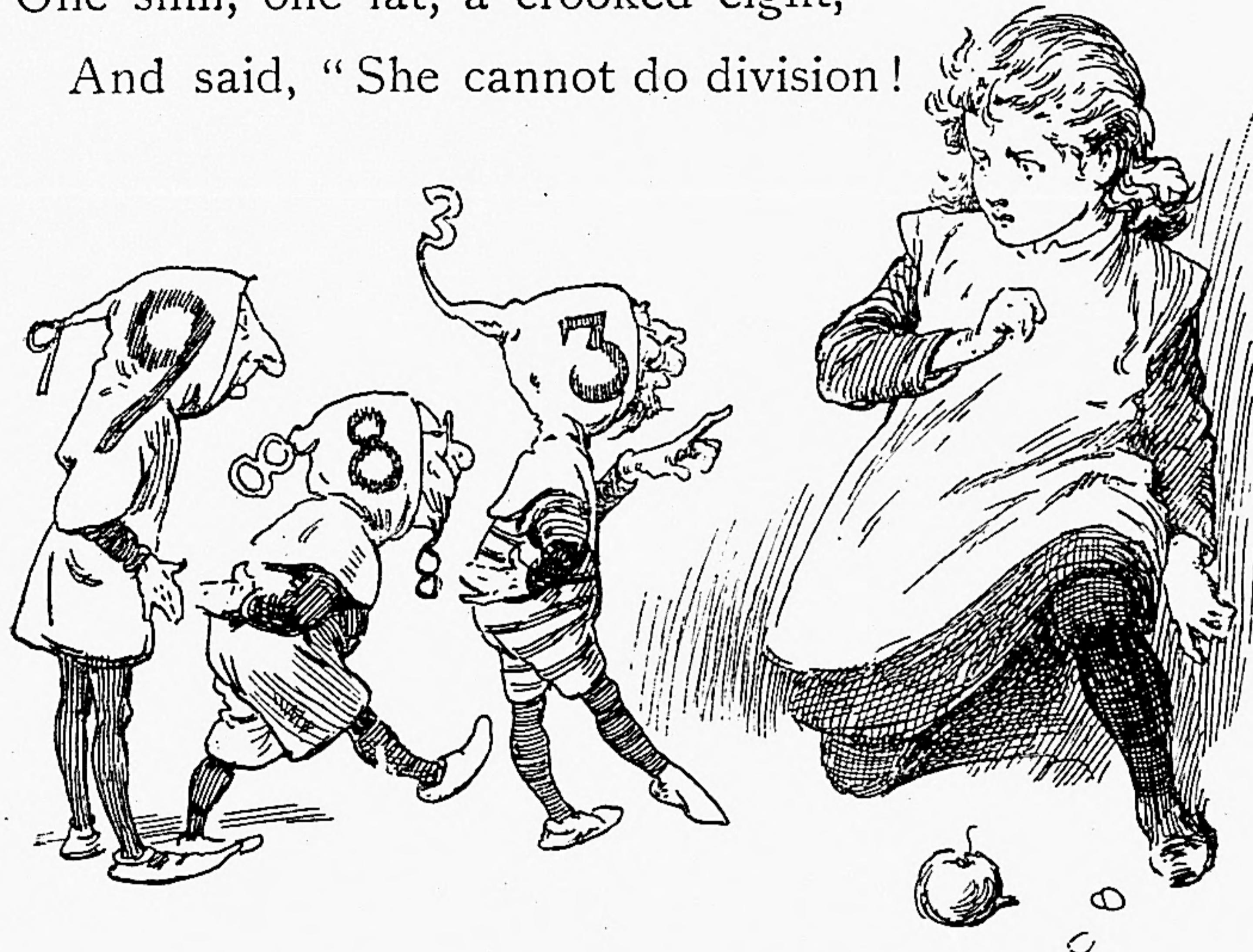
Not bears, but dwarfs! "Ah! now I know:
I'm Snow-white with the seven wee men!"

She saw them come, a zig-zag row;

But more than seven: there were ten.

The last was round, the first was straight;

They laughed and pointed in derision:
One slim, one fat, a crooked eight,
And said, "She cannot do division!"



"She swallows walnuts, shells and all,
And down her throat the pears will roll:
Just watch; I hope the cakes are small,
Because she always eats them whole."

The child gave up the feast, and cried;

Then came consoling Number Three.

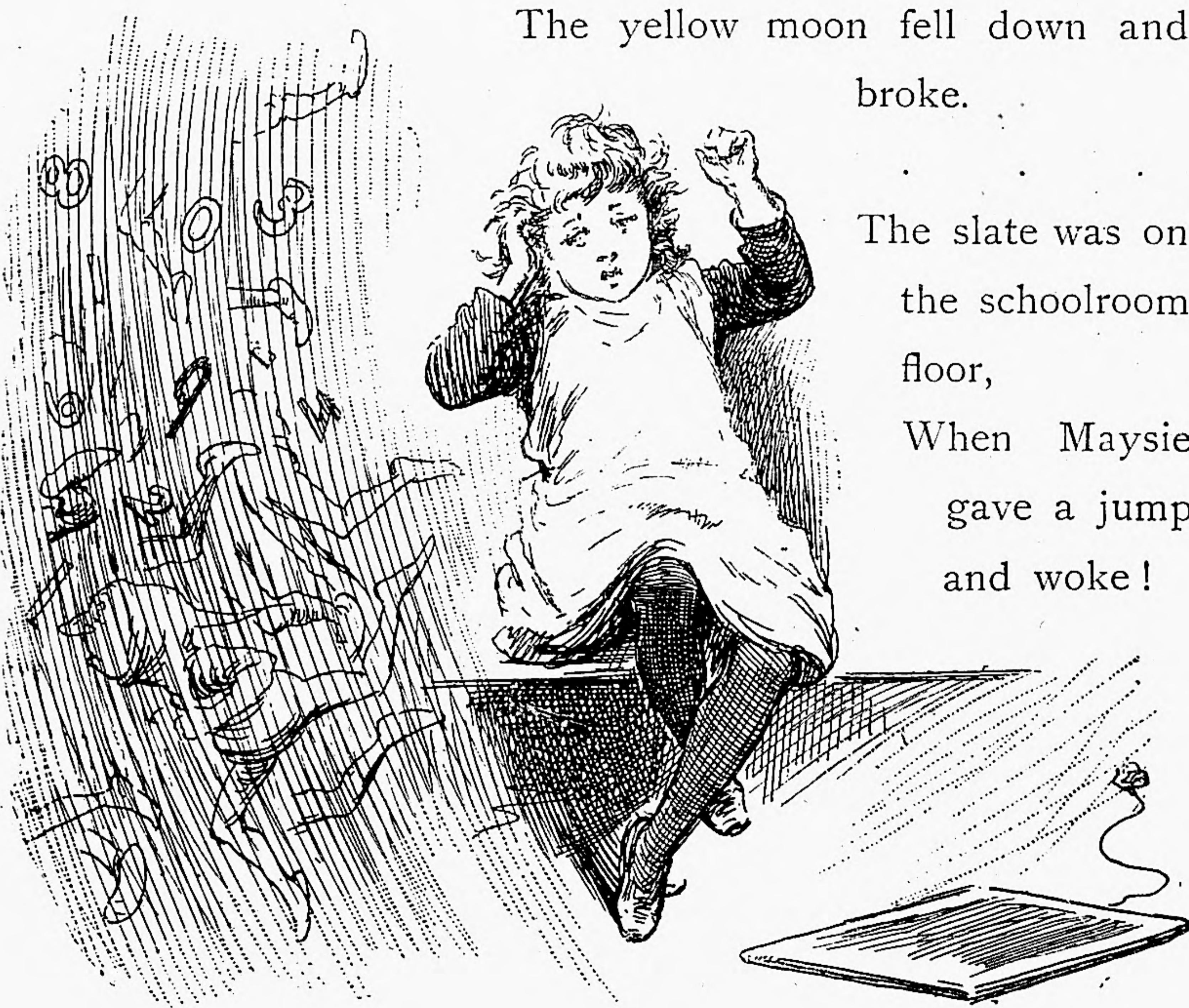
"You might do fractions if you tried;
Come now, and dance instead with me."

She danced outside. The little house
Shot up and shone, a yellow moon;
They danced aslant a country dance,
And all the pencils squeaked a tune.

A myriad dwarfs came, line by line,
Till in the corner row she stood—
One, Three, herself, and Nought, Six, Nine:
The corner had a wall of wood.

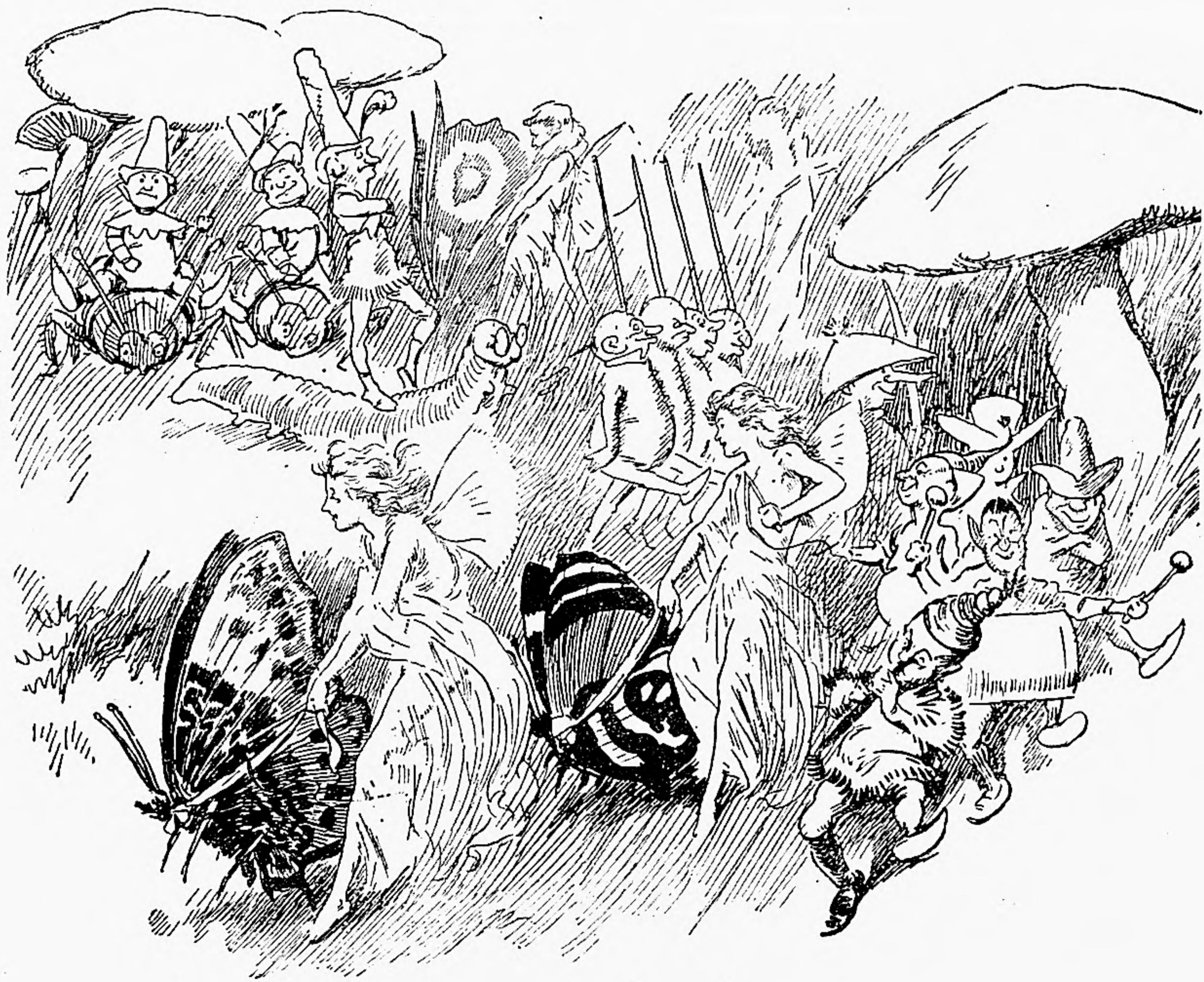
'Twas then the dwarfs began to snore;
The yellow moon fell down and
broke.

The slate was on
the schoolroom
floor,
When Maysie
gave a jump
and woke !



The Fairy Wedding

PRINCE POPPY in red
Is going to wed
Sweet little Princess Fay.



Here they come,
With a drum—tum, tum !
Get out of the way—out of the way.

THE FAIRY WEDDING

41

All the time
There's a wedding chime
Ringing where no one knows.

Merry bells ring
Ding, dong, ding,
In the breeze whenever it blows.



Stand aside
For the little bride,
Stand for her train to pass.

There she goes
In the white of a rose,
On the edge of the garden grass.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

Glow-worms bright
Make lantern light
The bushy branches under,
And even the owls,
Those round-eyed fowls,
Look down from the trees in wonder.

The wedding train
Is gone again,
The crickets are chirping loud,
And the moths of the town,
So big and brown,
Run after them, all in a crowd.

Can't we go too?
Come along—do!
Come with a run, run, run.
Though they all are past,
If we run very fast,
We may be in time for the fun.

Shall we get cake
Of the very best make,
Almond and sugar all over?
I am sadly afraid
They have wedding-cake made
Only of honey and clover.

Have they presents on view?
A dozen or two:—
Acorn cups in a set,
Of toadstools a stock,
And a dandelion clock,
And a ladybird just for a pet.



They will dance to-night,
In circles white,
Where mushroom rings are found:
Elf and fay
Will whirl and play
Merrily round and round.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

The prince and the bride
Will mount and ride
Away for the honeymoon :
Up through the night
Will be their flight,
And I hope they will come back soon.



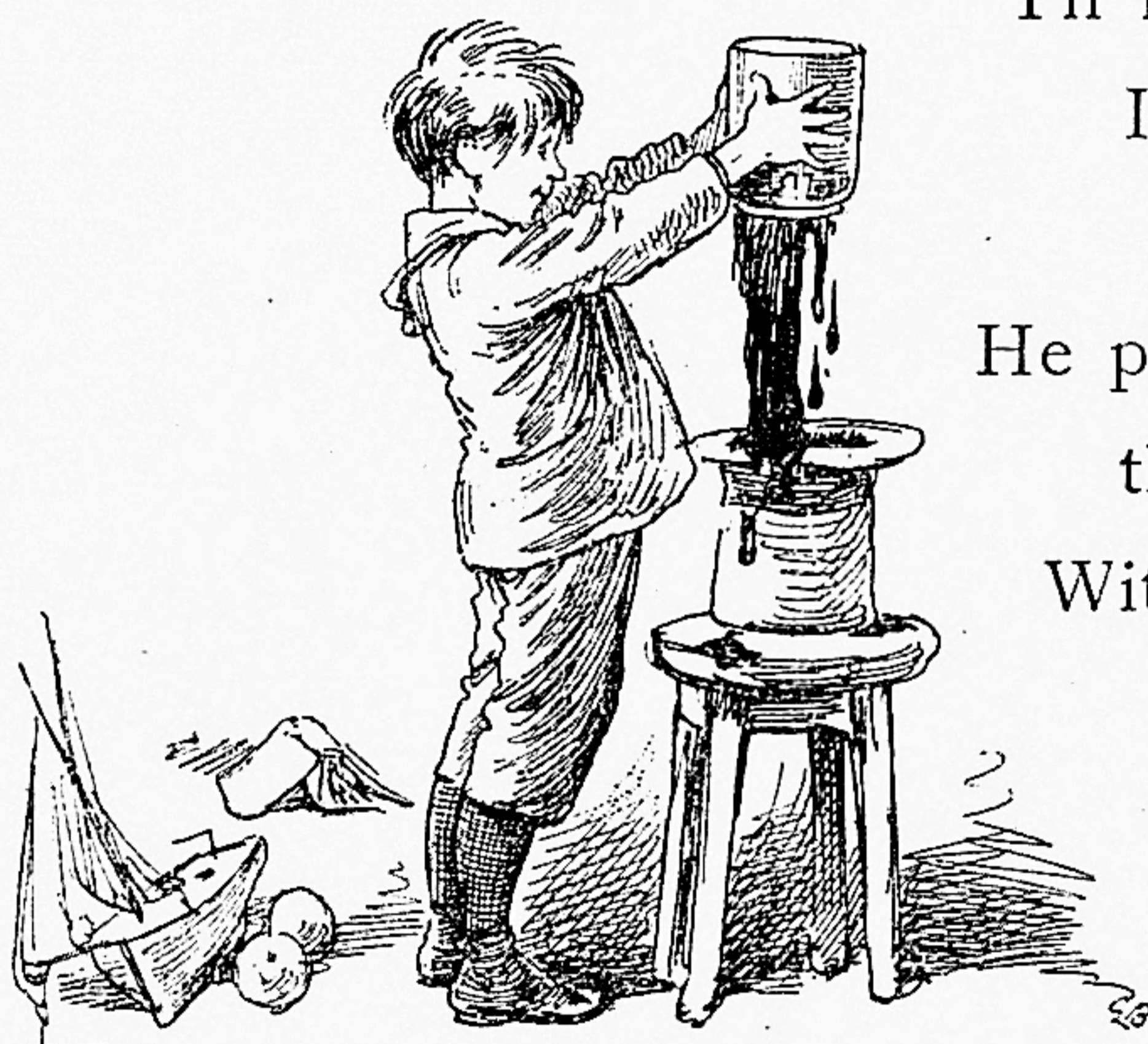
Will they go in a carriage
After the marriage?—
No; on the wings of a bat
They will fly away far
To the moon or a star.
Now what do you think of that?

Then fly, fly away,
Prince Poppy and Fay,
It is three by the farmhouse clock:
The east is pearly,
And dawn comes early,
And hark! there's the crow of a cock.

Uck-uck-uck-koo!
Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Gone; not a stir, not a gleam!
Have the fairies been here?
Did they all disappear?
Or was it a midsummer dream?

The Boy that went to Sea

OH ! very hard was life at school—
His tasks he would not utter ;
And very hard was life at home—
No jam—thick bread-and-butter.
And Master Jack was ten years old,
So he said to himself, said he—
“ I'll run away to sea—I will—
I'll run away to sea ! ”



He packed his pockets ; he stuffed
them tight
With provisions, a goodly store—
A nut to crack, and a bun to
bite,
And apples, a dozen or
more.

He buttoned a pancake inside his coat,
And kept it tidy and flat ;
And he put some jam in his hat—he did—
He put some jam in his hat.

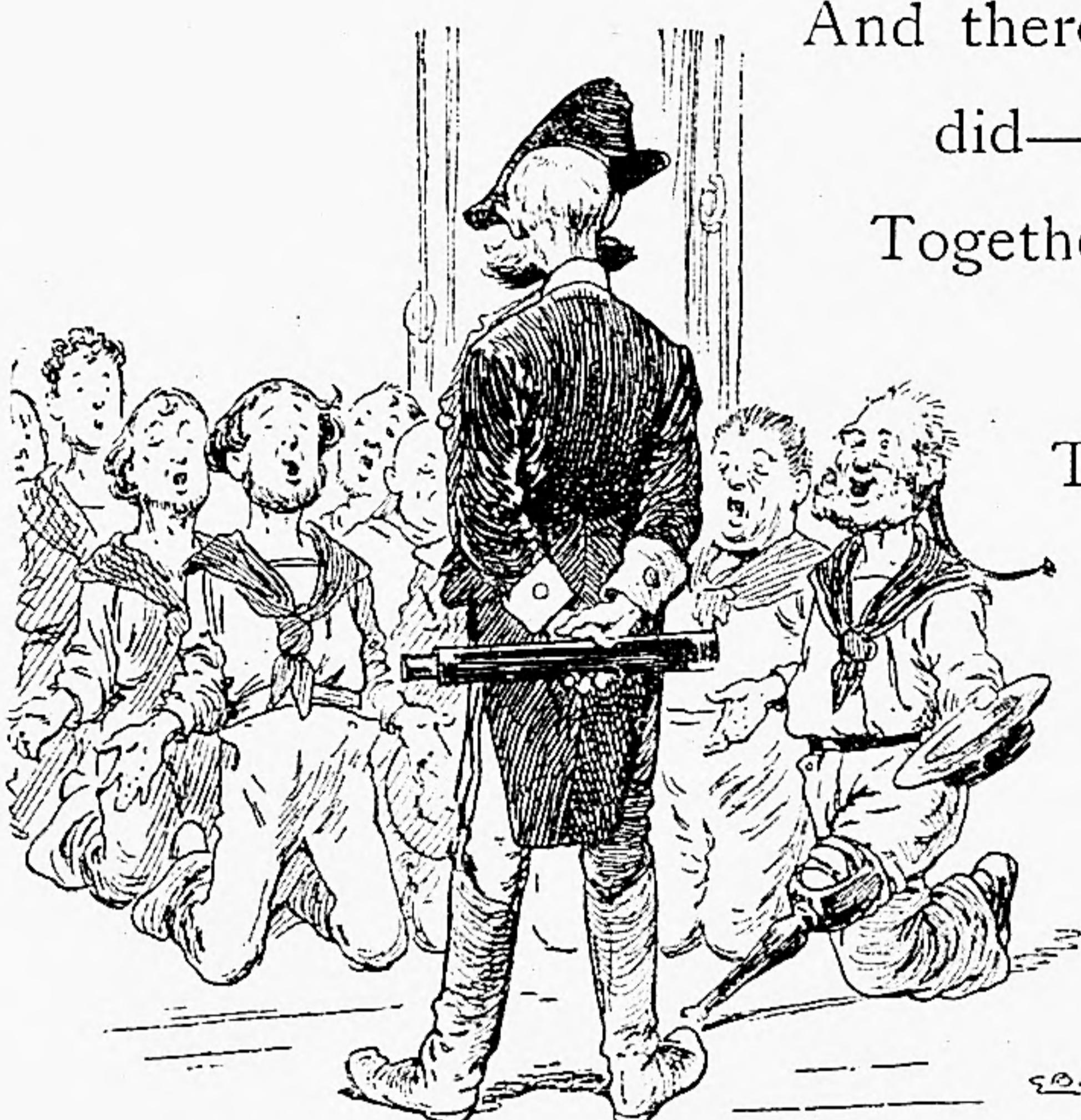
And he said, "My old tin whistle I'll take—
The sailors will like a tune
When the ropes are tied, and their shoes they shake
In a hornpipe under the moon.
Then fare ye well, my guinea-pigs !
Good-bye, my rabbits three !
I'm going away to sea—I am—
I'm going away to sea."

But when he said, "My dog, good-bye!"
His tears began to fall ;
Jock sat and begged, he knew not why,
Before him in the hall.
"Come, then, my faithful
terrier,
I'll never part from
thee ;
We both shall go to sea,
my dog—
We both shall go to
sea!"



So Jack and Jock ran down the street—
They both went off excited :
The terrier smelt the pancake sweet,
And hoped he yet would bite it.

They passed the shops, they found the ships—
 The noisy, busy dock ;
 And there stood Jack and Jock—they
 did—
 Together, Jack and Jock.



The captain said they were
 too small,
 The sailor men admired
 them,
 And knelt and asked him,
 one and all,

And so the captain hired them.
 And Jack was entered “seaman
 bold,”

Their names were in the book ;
 And Jock was “second cook,” he
 was,
 And Jock was “second cook.”

They sailed away, due west by
 east,

They went all round the maps ;
 And Jack on biscuits loved to feast,
 And Jock got fat on scraps.



They danced the sailor's hornpipe,
The captain and the crew;
And the little dog danced too—he did—
The little dog danced too.

But oh! they worked, those sailors
gay,

They made the galley
fast,

They ran aloft the live-
long day,

And slid right down
the mast.

They washed the decks
with scented soap,

And reefed aloft the
keel,

And round they turned
the wheel—and round

And round they turned the wheel.



But sudden came an earthquake shock:

The sharks were flung about,
The sea went up, the sky went down,
The ship went inside out.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

“ Oh, take me home ! ” the sailor cried,
Awaking with a scream :
It only was a dream—that’s all—
It only was a dream.

For never was there such a ship,
And never such a crew,
And never such a merry trip,
With such queer things to do.
So Master Jack remained at home,
His terrier dog and he ;
And they never went to sea—oh no ! —
They never went to sea.

The Organ-Monkey

IT was the organ-grinder.

The children gathered round,
And the monkey Jo sat tamely,
And heard the dismal sound.

The belted coat of monkey Jo

Was red as a rose in June,
But the organ was an old one,
And always out of tune.

Oh ! wistfully the monkey sat
Upon the organ sad,
And sometimes tried to clutch
the hair
Of some unhappy lad.

His ears were pink, his tail was
long,

He crouched and blinked his eyes ;
The children hoped he wouldn't jump
And take them by surprise.



BUTTERFLY BALLADS

And when the people crowded near,
 The master jerked a string ;
The monkey ran upon the street,
 And begged all round the ring.
And coppers poured into his hat,
 And fortune followed soon
For the man that owned the monkey
 And the organ out of tune.

The man grew rich and haughty,
 And wore a larger hat,
And lived upon lobster salad
 Till he was very fat ;
And bought a beautiful organ,
 With music new and gay,
And out again took monkey Jo,
 And began to grind and play.

When Jo, in his scarlet jacket,
 Heard the music under him grind
He kicked up such a racket,
 He nearly went out of his mind.
He flung his cap at the postman,
 And caught a nursemaid's head,
And chased a big policeman
 Till the man was nearly dead.

And they caught the frantic monkey
 Careering round the town,
 And brushed him with a hair-brush,
 And tried to tame him down.
 The man had not a penny ;
 The shrieking crowd were fled ;
 So he sold the brand
 new organ,
 And played the old
 instead.

Mild as a lamb, the
 monkey
 Grieved for that organ
 gay ;
 But when he heard the
 old one
 He fell and swooned
 away.

He lay like a rag on the organ,
 With his long tail hanging down :
 And the news of the dying monkey
 Attracted all the town.

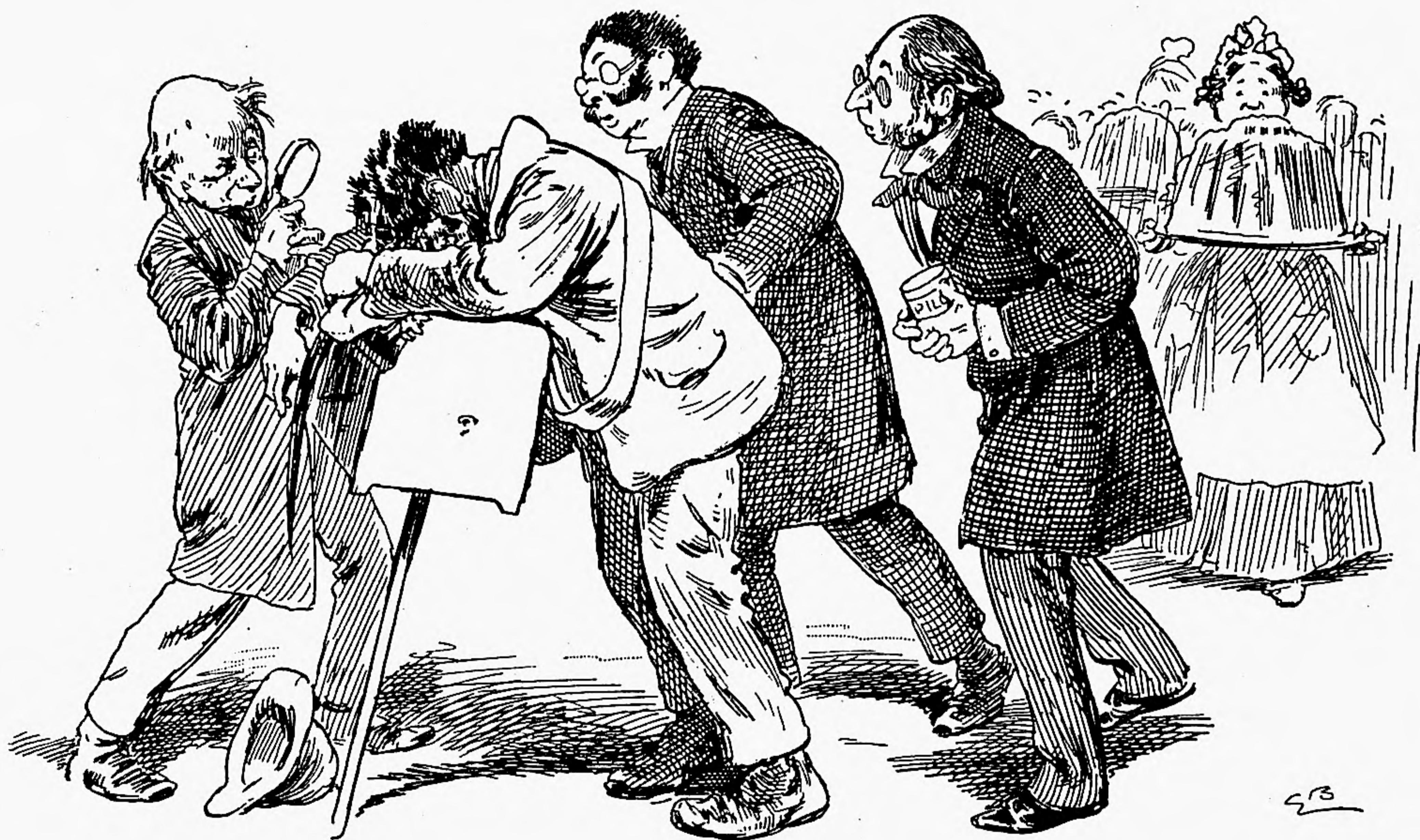
The doctors and the dentists
 Came running through the streets :
 The housewives came with jelly,
 The children came with sweets ;



BUTTERFLY BALLADS

The maidens came with custard,
And poultices of bran,
And plaisters made of mustard—
While wept the organ-man.

And some said, "Take him home to bed!"
And some said, "Bathe his feet!"



And some said, "Stand him on his head,
And give him jam to eat!"
He choked at smelling-bottles:
They fanned him with a fan,
And kept his sweets and custard
Beside him in a can.

Then spoke the organ-grinder:

“Alas! you cannot know
How very sympathetic
Was my poor monkey Jo.
The merry organ drove him wild,
The sad one flung him flat,
And our profession’s trying,
And so he dies—like that!”

The people gathered round him,
The women sobbed, “Poor thing!
He was not fit to rough it
In a jacket and a string.”
The men turned out their pockets,
With cheering words like these:
“Here’s forty pounds in coppers,
And let him live at ease!”

Then rose the merry monkey,
Like a jack-in-the-box rose he;
And the organ-grinder waved his hat,
And let the monkey free.
And Jo in the scarlet jacket,
And the happy organ-man,
Retired with a fortune of coppers
And the custard in a can.

The Quest of the Cherry Pie

THREE knights one day— What's that you say—nights in a day? No ; these were knights that were spelt with a *K*. Well, they met on the way and stopped to say, “What a very fine morning !” and “How do you do ?” and lifted their hats—big tin hats too. One was Sir Bogey de Bullaboo. He had kicked up a rattle in many a battle, making his enemies yell “Oh!”—and delighting in fighting, and slashing and smiting—and quick for a quarrel, and glad of a noise, and worse than seventy thousand boys : so he must have been a terrible fellow.

He rode a black horse, and his armour was black as a tarred fence, or a chimney-stack, or a beetle, or jet, or perhaps we can get something blacker than that—black as a blot or a great sooty pot—black as the blackest black cat. When he was dressed, he wore his crest,—three bits of black feather,—just to complete him. So now you'll know him if you meet him ; and you can beat a retreat down the street, or run away round the nearest corner, like the girl when the bull was going to horn her.

But oh ! the next was a beautiful knight. He was shining like silver ; his plumes were all white. Ever since he put down

his breakfast cup, the page and the butler had polished him up. He had sat in his saddle, with patience sore tried, while they stood on two step-ladders, one at each side, and smeared him with powder, and made him look cloudier ; but 'twas only the powder they used for the plate, and they polished it off till he looked first-rate, being rubbed and scrubbed by both together with brushes and dusters and chamois leather. Said the butler, a proud beholder of his own broad grin in his master's shoulder, "Now I'll just polish the whitening out of the cracks, sir." And the page kept puffing, "Shine yer back, sir!"

So when he rode out and turned about, he shone all over like a sugar-tongs or a silver cover. All the sunshine danced to catch him ; and his horse was white, to match him.

The last of the three was a silent man, as dingy as any tin can. He wore one feather, that once was red, stuck like a weathercock upon his head : the shabbiest bird that perched on a rail wouldn't have had such a thing in his tail.

"And where are you going with that rag on your head?"

"In search of adventures," the shabby knight said.

"And you," said Sir Bogey, in tones polite, to that fine old fogey they called the white knight. "I prithee, Sir Knight, are you—riding in search of adventures too ?"

"Oh, nothing so grand," said the glittering knight ; "I'm just out to get an appetite."

"Why, that will be rather bad for you," said the black Sir Bogey de Bullaboo ; "in all the country round, near or far, since the war, there's hardly a dinner to be found."

"But I think that a man has a perfect right to get what he can," said the grand white knight. "If I can't get a dinner, or even a bite, at least I may get an appetite."

"Oh, nonsense; that will never do," said the black Sir Bogey de Bullaboo. "If you and I found a cherry pie,—and you know we *might* meet it,—you'd be in too great a hurry to eat it, and I'd be cheated."

Said the white knight, "Why—oh, tell me why—in this world did you think of a cherry pie? And why do you ride abroad to-day? and why do you sniff at the skies all the way, like a sportsman's dog when he smells the grouse, or a cat that watches a hole for a mouse?"

The black knight answered: "Our friend with one feather rides out for adventures in this hot weather. And you, Sir Knight, with the plumes of white, are riding in quest of an appetite. But my quest is the best of all, for I—am riding in search of cherry pie. I woke and smelt it at break of day, and saddled my charger and rode away."

The white knight laughed, and his horse went prancing: he shone like the sun in a looking-glass dancing. "Oh, ho! it sets my heart a-thumping, and it sets my dish-covers all a-jumping, to hear of a cherry pie. I never shall rest until I die, but join in search of that cherry pie."

Said the shabby knight: "And so will I."

Sir Bogey de Bullaboo looked round and frowned. "Nobody asked you, sir," said he; "and you both are taking advantage of me. There can hardly be enough for three. I told you

about it, and I'll be the winner: I shan't be cheated out of my dinner."

"Now that's enough, don't be so gruff," said the shabby knight. "My dear Bullaboo, don't fight."

"So he asked them to sing a song, and go peaceably along. Nobody spoke; but they looked for smoke, and kept taking sniffs and whiffs, to know where the cherry pie was baking. This was the rhyme they sang all the time—

"Well-a-day! the war is done,
All the siege and slaughter:
Nothing left for anyone
But porridge and cold water.

"*Chorus*—Heigh ho! the enemy's beaten,
All the chickens and ducks are eaten.
Stew your boots and toast your candles,
Broil umbrellas with ivory handles!

"Well-a-day! the war is won,
Hard we fought and harder;
There's glory now for everyone,
And nothing in the larder.

"*Chorus*—Heigh ho! the enemy's beaten,
All the chickens and ducks are eaten.
Stew your boots and toast your candles,
Broil umbrellas with ivory handles!

By which mournful ditty we perceive—and 'twas a pity—that in all the castles about, provisions were run out. There was porridge, as much as they could wish ; but three times a day—they were tired of the dish ; it was even believed, by those who knew, that the porridge was only a sort of bran stew, made of old dolls, and old pincushions too. This accounts for the anxiety of these three knights for a little variety ; and it made Sir Bogey's sense so keen, that, as we have seen, he woke at break of day, and smelt cherry pie ten miles away.

Well, singing that song, they jogged along ; but of course Sir Bogey de Bullaboo said the white knight, and the dingy one too, were singing the chorus all wrong.

"Hush ! never mind," said the bright white knight ; "stop here ! Don't you find in the air a spice of something nice ?"

The dingy knight was seen to be staring with all his might at a distant castle, where smoke was whirling, out of a chimney, in great clouds curling.

The black knight pointed from his horse : "The cherry pie is there, of course."

The shabby knight wheeled round so fast, that he was first, and Sir Bogey last.

Each let his vizor down from his casque.

What in the world is that? you ask.

It means they hid eyes, nose, and all, by letting the fronts of their helmets fall. Riding in state to a castle gate, they put down their vizors, to look well dressed and in their best ; for the

same reason that ladies wear veils, or dogs wear collars dotted like nails, or peacocks raise and spread their tails. The white knight and Bogey de Bullaboo thought vizors became them—do you ?

"Let's go back," called the knight in black to the other pair.
"Come back and start fair."

The others were so very good as to turn back as fast as they could, to make a fair start all together—the white knight, the black knight, and that poor fellow with his armour dingy and rusty and yellow, and with one ragged feather.

Just for a friendly remark, he spoke : "What a good thing that I saw the smoke !"

"*I* pointed it out first," Sir Bogey replied.

"But *I* smelt it first," the white knight cried.

"*You!*" Sir Bogey de Bullaboo roared ; "why, I felt it the moment after I snored."

The two got so angry, they rode without knowing which way they were going.

"Come on !" said one.

"Be off !" said the other.

And the dingy man rode in between, saying, "Don't make a scene ; now, don't make a bother."

But the black knight was determined to fight: he hoped, if the other was thrown, he would ride to the castle alone, be invited to dinner by all who were there, and eat up the other poor fellow's share.

Now, the moment it came to a fight in earnest downright, Sir

Bogey saw, to his great delight, that their dingy friend rode off in a fright.

The white knight fought fiercely, with crashing and clashing : never before was such slashing and smashing. The noise of the battle was like tin cans dashing to make no end of a rattle.

At last the white knight felt giddy and addle, and a poke of the spear sent him out of his saddle. He lay on the ground without thinking of rising—which was not in the least surprising ; for as to those knights in the ages of history, how they ever stuck on a horse was a mystery, or how the horse kept straight under such a clatter and weight, and didn't kneel down and roll his load over his head on the road. So the grand white knight lay just where he fell, and kicked on his back like a crab in its shell.

But the victor, Bogey de Bullaboo, put spurs in his horse, and, galloping, flew—to the castle full speed on his coal-black steed, and knocked at the door with a double knock too.

All elated, Sir Bogey waited on the drawbridge across the moat ; his spirits were high, so he thought he'd try to find his voice and clear his throat, and he sang the Song of the Cherry Pie. He had reason to know from visits before, that one sometimes was kept on the step at the door.

“‘ Little maid, ah ! tell me why
Are you like a cherry pie ? ’

'I am sweet,' the maiden said,
'And my cheeks are cherry red;
And another reason strikes me—
'Tis that everybody likes me.'

"Little maid, I cannot doubt it;
Yet there's some mistake about it.
Shall I, shall I tell you why
You are like a cherry pie?
'Tis that, always, I'm afraid,
You want more sugar, little maid.'"

Sir Bogey, like the Christmas waits, was singing for glee, at the castle gates, when the door was suddenly opened wide, and the castle cook was standing inside, all in linen, with his apron tied; his hands were folded behind his back; his cap was flat, and his face was fat, and he was as plump as a sack. The castle cook was not a man fed on pincushion and broken doll's bran. In fact, it was clear he lived on good cheer; and the great Sir Bogey de Bullaboo requested his share of the good cheer too.

"Good sir," said the cook, "it's all eaten up; there's not a crumb left, nor a drain in a cup."

Said the knight, "Was there cherry pie cooked by you? Oh, tell me all, and tell me true! For I am Sir Bogey de Bullaboo; and I fought a knight in the field close by, that I alone might take for my own the stranger's share of that cherry pie."

The castle cook began to jeer. "Oh, what a joke! A stranger was here. He said two more were coming soon, and begged us to leave them a plate and a spoon; he said they were down in the big field fighting. But that cherry pie was so inviting, that we could not let him have his wish; so we gave him his share, and we scraped out the dish."

The great Sir Bogey de Bullaboo slowly to his home withdrew, crying, "Woe is me that I was greedy! Woe is me that I am needy! After quarrels and disputes, home I come to stew my boots!"

The Witch and the Truant

THERE was an old woman who lived in a dell ;
She was a witch, as my story will tell.

And there was a boy came walking that way,
Playing truant from school one day.

“ Good Morrow, my laddie ! ” the old dame said :
She wore a high hat, and her cloak was red.

She wore a red cloak and a steeple-crowned hat,
And under her arm she carried a cat.

“ Good Morrow, my laddie ! What’s your name ? ”
Said this very inquisitive, ancient dame.

“ My name is Timothy Tupkins, ma’am,
And mother is making her damson jam.”

“ Timothy, Timothy, tell me pray,
How are you out for a holiday ?

"Mind how you answer!" the old dame said;
And even the black cat shook his head.

Timothy fell on his knees on the grass:
"Good madam, I pray you, let me pass.



"If you were a boy,
and if I were you,
Perhaps you might
play truant too."

The witch looked
up, and the witch
looked down,
And took off her hat,
and looked into
the crown,

And said, "Timothy Tupkins, get up out of that;
And would you mind holding my faithful cat?

"I wonder would I a truant be,
If I were you, and if you were me?"

She caught him fast in her scarlet cloak:
"I'll try it, my laddie—just for a joke!"

She whirled, and danced, and spun him round,
Till they fell apart on the grassy ground;

So changed you couldn't tell which was which:
For the witch was the boy, and the boy was the witch.

Timothy Tupkins came home to cram
Seventeen pots of damson jam.

And the witch's cat, in the dead of night,
Woke Timothy's mother up in a fright:

Came down the chimney, with soot and noise;
Sang up the stairs in a tom-cat voice;

Found the way to Timothy's bed,
And purred all night on top of his head.

And wasn't the witch's tom-cat proud?—
Nobody slept, for he purred so loud.

Timothy Tupkins went to school,
And took his book, and sat on his stool.

The cat stole in, and, growing bolder,
Jumped, and sat on the scholar's shoulder,

And "miow'd" at the master, and winked at the boys,
Till lessons were lost in laughter and noise.

"*Exstingue pussum!* Hunt it out!"

And the cat and the master went chasing about.



The ink was spilt
and the table
turned,
And not a lesson
was said or
learned.

And Timothy sat
with a dunce's
cap,
And the cat was safe
in the dunce's lap.

"Oh, pussy!" said he, "let us steal away,
And go and eat blackberries all the day."

"Why not?" said the cat. It spoke out loud—
The boys and the master fled in a crowd.

The witch was up in a poplar tree—
A very queer place for a witch to be.

And—oh, but it was the strangest thing!
This funny old woman had made a swing.

"Good Morrow, my laddie; good Morrow," said she;
"Go back to your lessons, and leave me free."



"No," said the boy. "It is hardly the rule
For dames of my age to be taught at school."

I tell you, you could not say which was which,
For the witch was the boy, and the boy was the witch.

The faithful cat, with eyes of fire,
Chased the false witch high and higher.

Till down she fell, as if never to stop,
All the way from the poplar top.

And the truant boy was himself as he fell:
“What an adventure I have to tell!”

And the witch tucked up the cat in her gown,
And sailed off on a broomstick, and never came down.

Wings

"Oh, give me wings to fly away!"

So sang Belinda Brown.

She practised singing every day;

Her scales went up and down.

She sang, "Oh, would I were a bird!"

And "*Si oiseau j'étais,*"

Till something suddenly occurred

In quite a startling way.

Belinda Brown would give a shout

That made the lamps to ring,

And nearly blew the windows out,

Oh, but that girl could sing!

She sat at the piano-forte

And banged it all the day.

"Oh, give me wings to fly-y-y,

To fly-y-y away!"

They set the windows open wide:

Her friends said, "Dear, how sweet!"

Belinda's voice was all their pride:

One heard it down the street.

"Oh, give me wings to fly away!"

The neighbours understood,
And fervently they wished one day—
They really wished she would.

Belinda ceased her song at last,
Stood up and crossed the floor;
The white French window back was cast
Like any garden door.
Behind her, like a butterfly,
Her gauzy wings projected—
They startled her as she went by,
In window glass reflected.

"Wings! wings! at last!" she cried. "What fun!"
And danced with glee and laughter,
Went towards the garden with a run;
But oh! the moment after,
She floated from the steps, and flew,
Ascending like a kite,
And screamed, "Oh, catch me! catch me—do!"
At such a giddy height.

"They told me I would crack my voice
If I went up too high;
And here I am, against my choice,
Straight making for the sky."

She tangled in the telegraph,
And really felt quite vexed
To see the people stand and laugh:
“What *will* the girls do next?”

Her pretty wings went flutter, flap,
From England off to France.

Belinda said, “How like the map!”
And knew it at a glance.

She could not quite enjoy the view,
The height was so appalling;
She shook like jelly, as she flew,
With nervous fear of falling.

Away she floated o'er the Alps,
And tried to catch their tops.

“Farewell,” said she, “to toast and tea,
To chickens and to chops.

For *terra cotta* how I long—

No!—*terra firma* stony.
O Italy, the land of song!

O dolce macaroni!”

But, blown away across the sea,
At last she slowly sinks,
And sees old Egypt’s pyramids,
The desert, and the sphinx.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

Then up again, with weary wings,
She drifted, hopeless ; gazing
At coral islands round as rings,
And tropic ocean blazing.

She sighed, " My wings, from mile to mile,
Go slower—flip, flap, flop !
The natives of some savage isle
Will eat me when I drop.

In some lone isle where palm trees stand,
There, there will end my folly ;
And parrots, in their native land,
Croak o'er me, " Pretty Polly ! "

Ah, sad indeed were such a fate !
But when her wings were failing,
She saw a captain and a mate,
Big steamer—bridge—white railing.
And safe at last she caught the mast :
The captain and the crew
Said, " Shall we shoot that splendid bird,
Or catch it for the Zoo ? "

She cried, " Oh, spare Belinda Brown ! "
They answered not a word ;
But climbed, and caged her, brought her down—
" It talks—the Mermaid Bird ! "

She said, "I am a hapless maid ;
 Oh, speak not of the Zoo !
I wished for wings to fly away—
 Alas ! one day I flew !"

The captain opened wide her cage,
 The mate took off her wings ;
Some wicked elf had tied them on,
 And knotted all the strings.
The first-class passengers for days
 Discussed Belinda's history ;
" The girl," they said, " has flighty ways,
 But still there *is* a mystery ! "

His Last Ride

COME, all ye boys, and list to me—
 Sit still, or else stand steady—
And you shall hear the history
 Of Johnny Hodge and Neddy.

Come, all ye patient asses, too,
 And near our circle draw,
And if the story comforts you,
 Sing “Ho and a high hee-haw!”



A heavy boy was
 Johnny Hodge,
A very heavy boy;
But Neddy was a merry
 ass,
A four-legg'd thing
 of joy:
A waggish donkey
 with a will—
He wagged his
 under jaw,

He wagged his ears, he wagged his tail,
Singing, "Ho and a high hee-haw!"

They grew together side by side:
Hodge *said* he loved the beast;
But how to manage him, and ride,
He knew not in the least.

They went at Neddy's own sweet will—
The donkey's will was law;
When Neddy liked, they both stood still,
With a "Ho and a high hee-haw!"

When Johnny went to see the fair,
He wore his old smock-frock,
His gaiters were a sorry pair,
His hat showed many a knock.
New finery was there—alas!

He wished for all he saw—
Blue coats with buttons made of brass.
Poor Neddy sighed, "Hee-haw!"

So Johnny went to every stall:
Saw mermaids for a penny;
A penny for the tent of ghosts
(Of course there were not any);
Another penny for a swing—
He swung with fear and awe:
While Neddy cropped some green-leaved thing,
And nobody knew—"Hee-haw!"

But vainly, vainly Hodge had turned
 His mind to sweets and swings:
 For that blue coat his bosom burned—
 Brass buttons *are* nice things.
 All night he laid his heartless schemes,
 While on the stable straw
 Poor Neddy slept with
 happy dreams,
 And snored a soft
 “Hee-haw!”

Next day the merry sun
 arose
 For splendid summer
 weather.

Hodge tied a rope to
 Neddy’s nose,
 And off they went
 together.

The last day of the village fair—
 Hodge mounted thoughtfully:
 “I think I’ll sell the donkey, there.
 Woa, Neddy! Gee up, gee!
 “For I must buy that coat of blue,
 With buttons all of brass;
 The tinker wants a donkey too—
 I’ll say, ‘Look—there’s an ass!’”



So good-bye, Ned! Off Neddy goes
The tinker's cart to draw."

Whereat the donkey raised his nose
And whooped a wild "Hee-haw!"

Not to the tinker! No. He danced,
He swung his tail on high,
And gaily down the street he pranced:
"To the tinker! No—not I!"

Away! his master loved him not;

Away! 'tis time to go—
But *not* to draw the
tinker's cart.

John Hodge cried,
"Stop him! Wo!"

And Neddy stopped—too
suddenly

And flung his heels on
high,

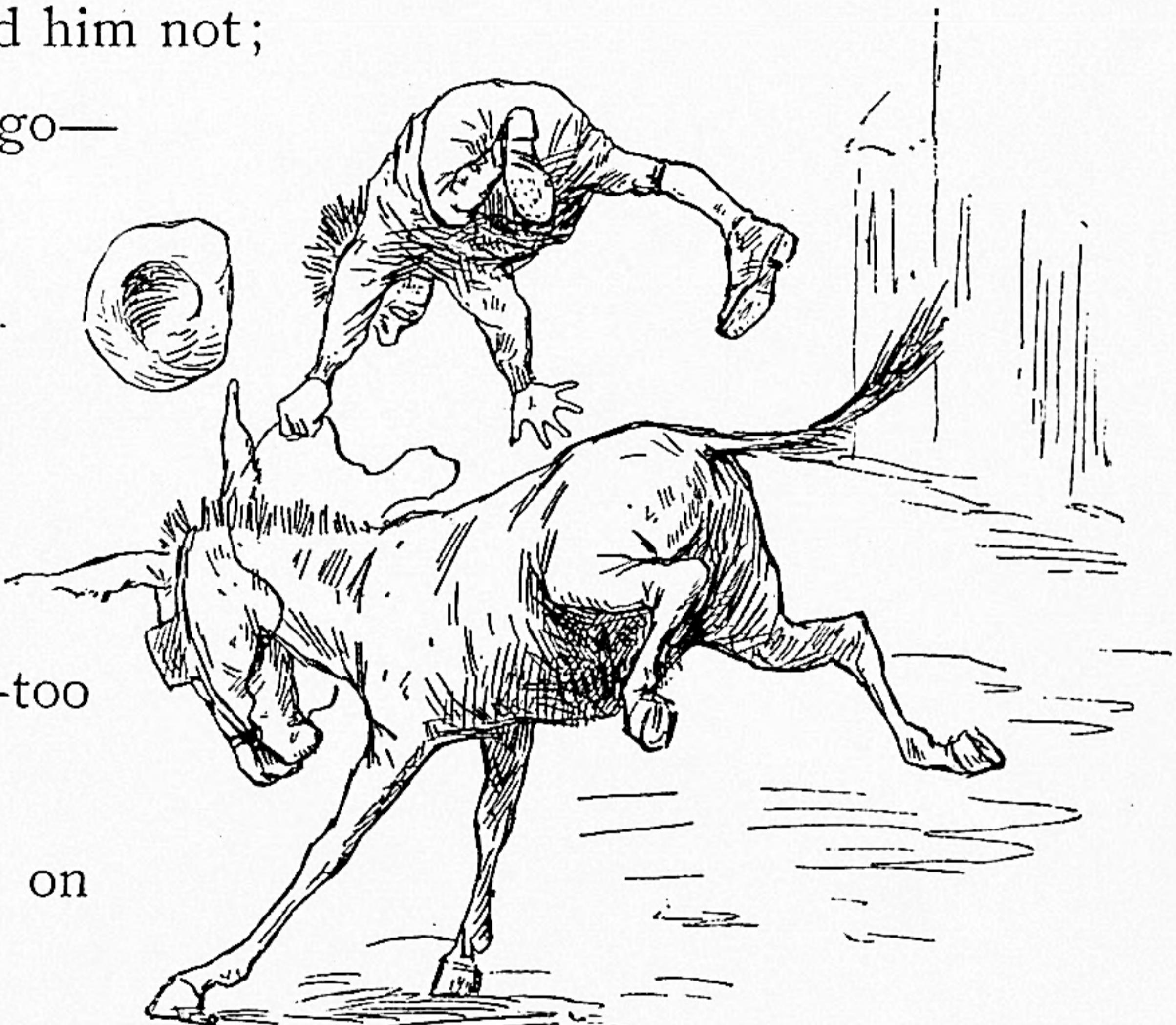
And Johnny Hodge went
soaring up

With one despairing cry.

He tumbled over Neddy's head:

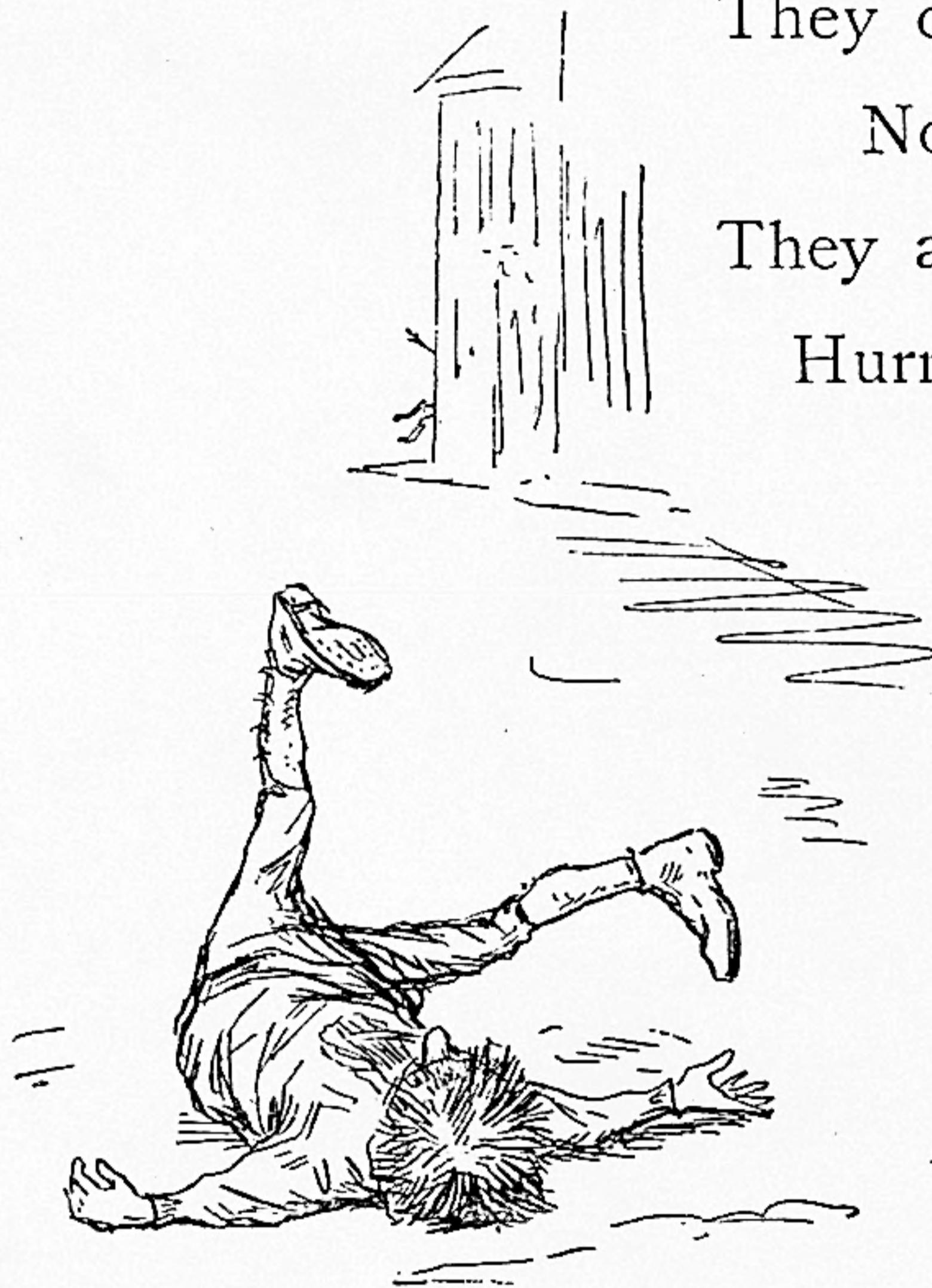
He fell—alack!—alas!

Just then the tinker passed and said,
"Look, Neddy!—*There's an ass!*"



But now the frisky beast was free
 From Hodge the greedy-hearted,
 And round the corner galloped he,
 And like a shot departed.

They could not find him in the pound,
 Nor grasp him by the law ;
 They advertised : he was not found—
 Hurrah and a high hee-haw !



It may be to a sunny clime
 That donkey sped away,
 And rolled in beds of scented
 thyme,
 And taught young lambs to bray,
 And skipped with little shepherds
 there,
 And shepherdesses sweet,
 And always lived in clover fields,
 And got pound-cake to eat.

Let's hope 'twas so for Neddy,
 'Though I doubt that happy end ;
 But the moral of his story
 Is : Never sell your friend.
 And if you go out riding,
 Hold fast—stick on like glue ;
 And don't say, " *There's a donkey !*"
 Lest he make an ass of you.

A Chinese Story

HAVE you heard of the lovely Sing-see?
She lived upon ginger and tea,
 She had such little shoes
 That she hardly could choose
But go hopping—the lovely Sing-see.

Sing-see was a Mandarin's daughter,
She had gardens and gold-fish in water,
 And she walked round the pond
 With azaleas beyond:
The Mandarin's beautiful daughter.

'Twas all like the willow-plate ware;
For fanciful bridges were there,
 Built up with bamboos—
 There were wonderful views
Like you see on the willow-plate ware.

And far away rose the pagoda,
It stood on the hill down the road—a
Mile off or so,
With the rice fields below,
And the birds flew about the pagoda.

Well, all was in peace for a season.
A change came: I'll tell you the reason.
Kwang met with Hang-Foo
And said, "How do you do?"
And both muttered sullenly, "Treason!"

For the Mandarin's beautiful daughter
Had many admirers who sought her;
And everything nice,
Made of sugar and spice,
In the daintiest china they brought her.

But the richest of all was Hang-Foo,
And he dressed in a beautiful blue;
His pig-tail was neat,
And hung down to his feet:
The yellow and sallow Hang-Foo.

But there was an ardent young poet,
So famous, his name you must know it:

Of course I mean Kwang,
Who so tenderly sang,
The soulful and gifted young poet.

He sang serenades with a gong;
In the silence of evening his song
Made the Mandarin jump
With the very first thump
Of the stick on the Chinaman's gong.

In the evening he sat on the wall,
And sang with a sorrowful call:
'Twas a startling effect,
For you would not expect
A gong on the top of the wall.

"Maiden with the pasted hair
Flower-pinned, beyond compare,
Maiden with the gentle stare,
Chinese maiden!
Almond eyes I can't forget,
All aslant and black as jet,
Painted cheeks with roses set,
Chinese maiden!"

Then someone cried, "How do you do?"
And there was his rival Hang-Foo.

The poet climbed down,
Backwards, slow, with a frown,
And gruffly said, "How do you do?"

Climbing down, he had felt a slight jerk,
But climbing was difficult work.

Still he could perceive
Hang-Foo had one sleeve
Stuffed bulky since that little jerk.

They bowed as polite as you please,
Salutations they said in Chinese:

"How old are you, friend?
May your life never end!"

They bowed as polite as you please.

But both of them muttering "Treason!"

They parted in haste, for this reason:

Hang-Foo said, you see,
"They have asked me to tea,"
And politely they bowed, growling "Treason!"

All the little Chinese of Canton
Cried, "Where is your pig-tail? It's gone!"

And the poet knew after,
The cause of their laughter,
As he went through the streets of Canton.

And he thought of the sleeve of Hang-Foo
(A sleeve is a pocket there too):

His tail was cut short,
In spite or in sport,
When he climbed backwards down to Hang-Foo.

With a large Chinese lantern light,
All crinkled and coloured and bright,
He went, somewhat later,
In search of the traitor,
And carried a lantern light.

Hang-Foo in his beautiful blue,
He straightway began to pursue ;
And seizing in flight
The pig-tail, held tight
To the man in the beautiful blue.

The rice fields were flooded with water :
They fought for the Mandarin's daughter :
They went with a dash,
And a slip and a splash,
Through rice fields all flooded with water.

Hang-Foo, with his pig-tail so grand,
Felt it suddenly go in Kwang's hand :

It was bought in a shop,
And tied on at the top:
And off came his pig-tail so grand.

One back and one forward they tumbled,
And stood up all dripping, and grumbled,
“Let us bow, and not strike,
For we both are alike:
All tail-less and muddy and tumbled.”

So, muddy and meek, they went back,
And the way was all wet in their track;
And, looking unsightly,
They bowed most politely:
So weary and wise they went back.

And the maiden said “No” in the garden,
Her soft little heart seemed to harden:
She sent suitors away,
A score every day,
And walked round and round in the garden.

So she lived upon ginger and tea,
They say, to a hundred and three.
She devoted herself
To the jars on the shelf:
And she lived upon ginger and tea.

The Lay of the Red-hot Poker

PART I

HE made mud-pies
'Neath sunny skies,
When he was a boy like other boys;
He made mud-pies, and he made a noise.

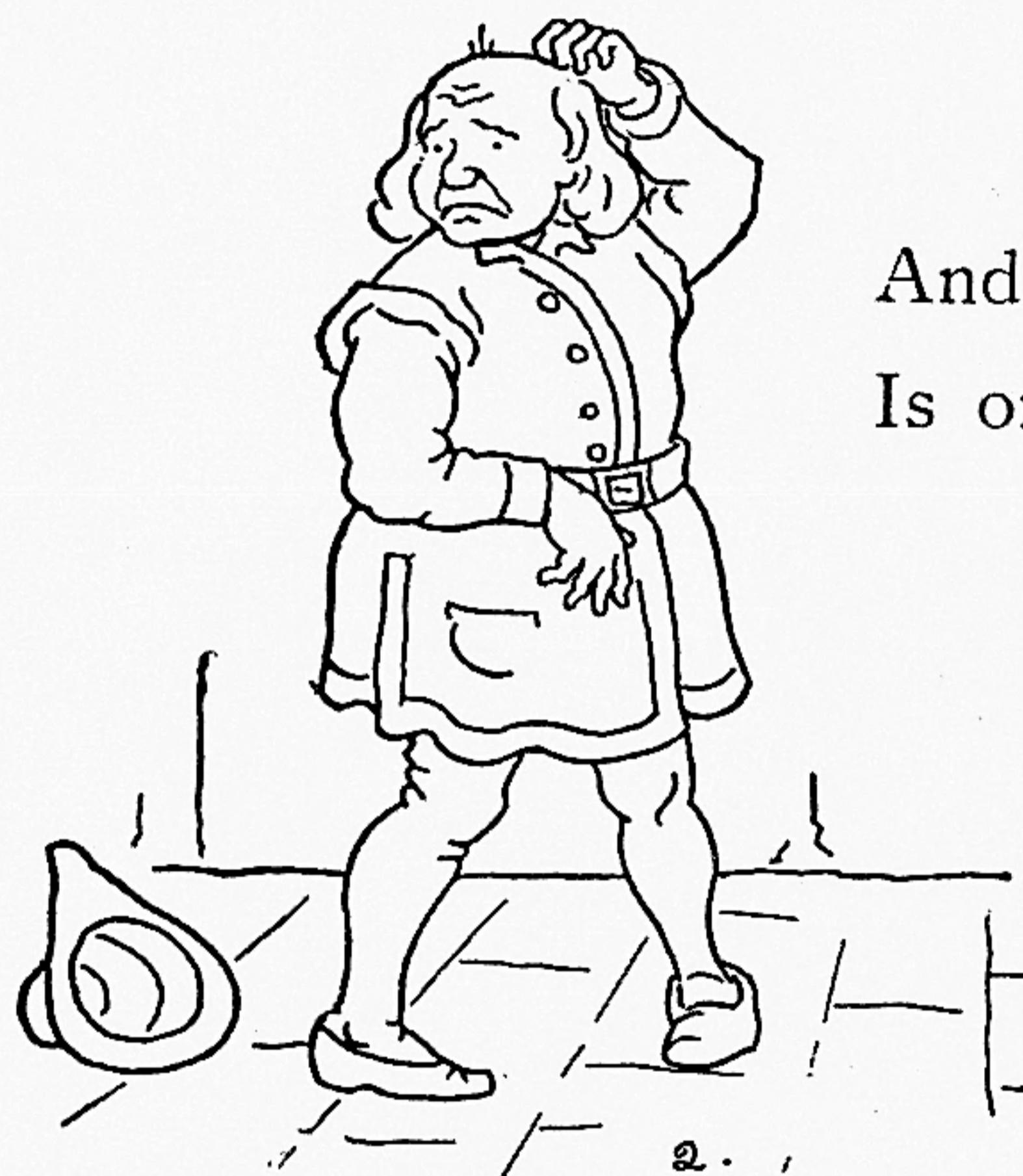
The Spanish sun
Would bake a bun,
It blazes hot on flower and bud.
(Wherever did he get the mud?)

And yet I say
He loved to play
At those mud-pies the live-long day:
A wilful boy will have his way.

With studious pride
He also tried
Experiments with squibs and rockets,
For which he emptied out his pockets.

Till neighbours moaned,
And jumped, and groaned.

“Oh, what a noise—it took the breath of us:
That horrid boy will be the death of us!”



Yet Pedro's father
Liked it rather,
And said, “This little lad, you see,
Is only fond of chemistry.”

But every morning
He gave a warning
Unto his son: “Look here, my
joker,
Take care you never heat the
poker.

“My son, beware,
My son, take care:
There may be consequences dire:
Don't leave the poker in the fire.”

Then Pedro grew,
As most boys do;
And all his youth he did persist:—
“I mean to be an Alchemist.”

"With time enough,
And books and stuff,
All things the druggist ever sold,
I'll find the secret, and make gold."

His father said,
With a shake of the head,
"You might *make gold* at any
trade,

But not as an Alchemist, I'm
afraid ;

"At least I doubt it;
I don't know much about
it.

But, Pedro, whatever you do or do not,
Don't on any account make the poker red-hot!"



PART II

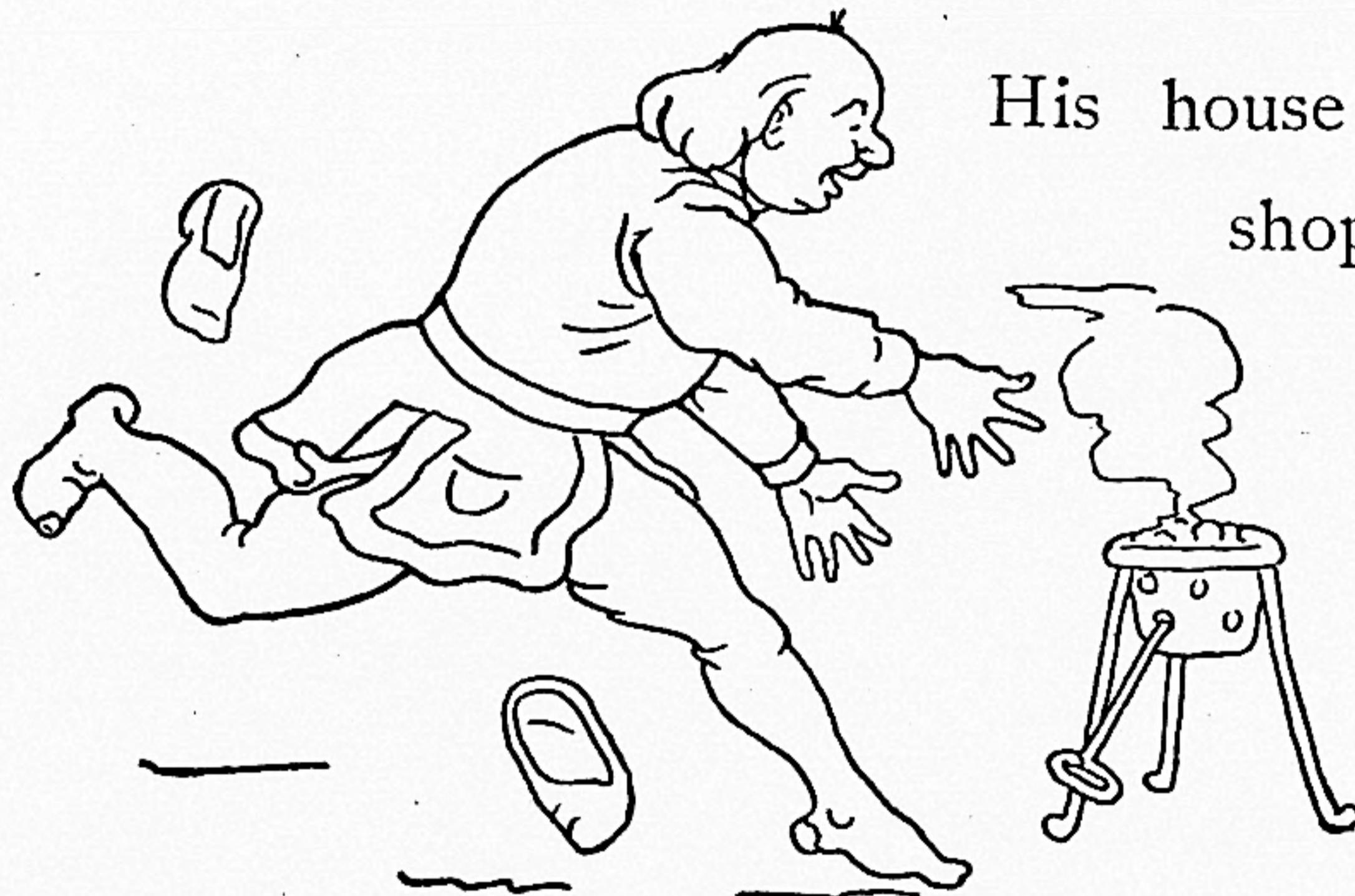
Pedro the Alchemist lived in Spain,
Night and day he laboured in vain :

He was making gold,
The people were told.

Striving to make it, day and night,
He could not succeed—not yet—not quite.

And what did he make?
Why—a little mistake.

Pedro the Alchemist, learned man,
Had pestle and mortar, and pot and pan:
He talked like a book,
And he worked like a cook.



His house was like a druggist's
shop,
The neighbours said he
ought to stop.
But he said, "Not
I,
I must try, try, try!"

He made explosions, horrid messes,
Strange smells, beyond all earthly guesses:
Pounded and brewed,
And steamed and stewed.

And blew off metal heated to vapour,
And gathered up the dross with a scraper.
"Not yet—by and by!
I must try, try, try!"

Pedro the Alchemist, day by day,
Spent forty years, till his hair was grey.

Said the neighbours, "Stop!
Can't you let the thing drop?"

"You cannot make gold, not the size of a button,
Or enough to stand a Spanish nut on,
Not the worth of a penny;—
No one ever made any."

Pedro the Alchemist poked the fire.

"Ah! little they know of my life's desire,
And the mixture new,
Which I think will do."

He made the mixture. "Now in a minute
I'll have the secret. I must put in it
Some iron old,
To turn to gold."

But where was the iron? What should he do?
He could not find even a nail or a screw.

The poker? Why wait?
It was stuck in the grate.

Into the mixture, swift as a shot,
He plunged the poker—alas, red-hot!
And like cannon loaded
The bowl exploded.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

Pedro the Alchemist soared on high,
Out through the ceiling, and into the sky.

The terrible noise
Brought crowds of boys.



And women came running, and
said, "I wonder
Was that a gun, or a peal
of thunder?"
"Thunder! No—louder!
He is blown to powder!"

For the Alchemist's house
was flat on the ground,
And Pedro the Alchemist
couldn't be found.

But he fell from the sky at Seville,
And perhaps he lives there still.

The moral now:—It is not wise
To spend your boyhood at mud-pies.

But, whatever you do, *do not*
Make the poker red-hot.

Algernon's Army

ALGERNON'S army is marching by—
Glory and victory lead the way!
Oh, but they lift their feet up high!—
Squeak the whistle and bang the tray!

Banners red are flaunting brave ;
Helmets flash, and weapons
bristle ;
Handkerchiefs on sticks they
wave—

*Bang the tray and squeak
the whistle !*

Algernon's army are soldiers
bold,
Golden youth for the war
to-day :

Every one of them six years old—

Bang the whistle and squeak the tray !



BUTTERFLY BALLADS

Algernon's army may bravely fall,
But never, oh never! shall run away:
Two ranks of three—six men in all—
Merrily bang the bulging tray!

A helmet bright has every man,
Proudly marching along the street—
A jelly mould or an old tin can—
Oh! but the tray and the whistle are sweet!

All are armed for brave defence,
Shining sixpenny sword in hand:
Algernon's gun cost eighteen pence—
Whistle and bang for the soldiers' band!

“Right about face!” and “Halt!” and “Stop!”
Hear the commander hoarsely speak.
The army besieged the confectioner's shop—
Bang the tray and the whistle squeak!

“Left about face! Quick march!” he said.
Down the lane by briar and thistle—
Out of the town his troops he led—
Squeak the tray and bang the whistle!

Marching forward never to yield,
Where is the battlefield they seek?
If they can't find a battle, they *can* find a field—
Tramp with the tray and the whistle squeak!

Hurrah! hurrah! for the field is won—
 They took the field: it was easy to take—
 Hurrah for the eighteen penny gun—
Whistle and bang: what a noise they make!

Down by the river the tents they pitch,
 Making a camp, for rest is sweet.
 Tents are *imagined*, you know, by the ditch—
Softly, softly, the tea-tray beat!

Soldiers dream of wars to
 come,

Dream of home so far
 away.

That ditch is full of frogs
 and scum—

*Dreamily, dreamily, beat
 the tray!*

Soldiers rest! Of glory think!
 In a row they swing their
 feet,

Seated on the ditch's brink—

Lullaby—the tea-tray beat!

Proudly hold the standards high,

After all the battle's riot;

Plant them in the sward close by—

Keep the tray and whistle quiet!



See, the army rests in camp,
'Kerchiefs red above them fly ;
And the place is rather damp—
Tray and whistle—lullaby !

Sudden came the wild alarm—
Weep and wail, ah ! well-a-day !
Fright and panic—hurt and harm—
Fling the whistle at the tray !

Suddenly came a wild surprise—
Algernon's army began to shriek :
“ *There he is ! Here he is ! Oh, what a size !* ”
Bang the tray and the whistle squeak !

The enemy jumped. The captain bold
Clung to Tommy, and Tom to Jack ;
Tumbling Jack on Peter rolled—
Bulge the tray and the whistle crack !

Poor little Peter fell upon Jim,
Jim upon Jeremy, last in the line ;
Each cried the other was squeezing him—
Sadly now should the whistle whine !

Algernon's army tried to rise,
And over the edge the army fell ;
Green stuff covered them up to the eyes—
Drum the tray with a solemn swell !



"And over the edge the army fell."

Slimy and grimy, and wet to the skin,
Algernon's army went running away.
Each said the other had pulled him in—
Beat a retreat on the whistle and tray!

Who was the enemy, great and grim?
Whence, oh! whence, did the monster come?
A jumping frog at the water's brim—
Hark in the distance the whistle and drum!

Only a frog that danced too near,
Out of the ditch where the polywogs play.
He won the battle—the fact is clear—
Still the whistle and stop the tray!

The Dolls' Dance

COME, dance with the poker,
And dance with the tongs,
And sing with the kettle
The sweetest of songs ;
For it's better to dance
On a wet afternoon,
Than to sit at the window
And sing out of tune.

An organ was playing
Far off in the rain,
And a great daddy-long-legs
Danced round on the pane.
The organ was grinding
A tooraloo-loo !
And unless one would dance,
There was nothing to do.

A tooraloo do,
And a tooraloo don't!
And some said, "I will!"
And some said, "I won't!"
And the dollies came down
From the old easy-chair,
And held out their muslins,
And bowed with a stare.



'Twas a minuet, maybe,
Or quaint old gavotte,
But they creaked round and round
With a glide and a trot.
They danced on their heels,
All stiff and all square,
And held out their dresses,
And bowed with a stare.

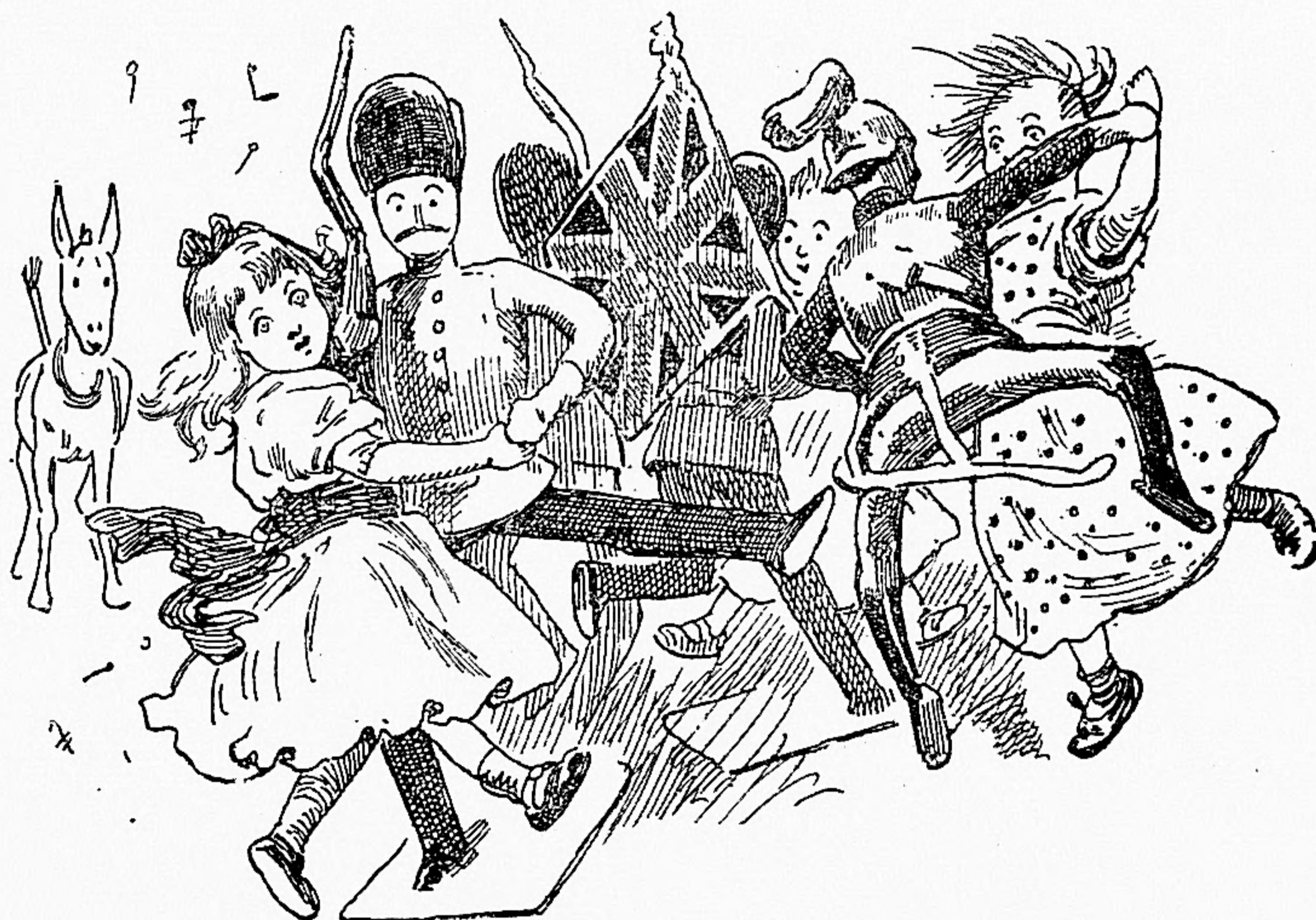
The little grey donkey
 Came nodding his head,
 And flung off his bas-
 kets,
 And stood up instead.
 And into the corner
 He kicked his green
 stand,
 And the prettiest dolly
 He took by the hand.



Then all the tin soldiers,
 So glorious in battle,
 Sprang out of their box
 With a jingle and rattle.
 "Shall we stay in the cupboard,
 If donkeys can dance?
 No! down to the revel!
 Quick march, and advance!"

The nearer they came
 The bigger they grew;
 And some were in red coats,
 And some were in blue.

And they danced in a way
That surprised the beholder,
For each had his musket
Held tight to his shoulder.



They were large as the dolls,
And a great deal more splendid.
But, alas! for the way
That the dollies' dance ended;
For the soldiers looked lovely,
In white, red, or blue,
But a dance with a musket
Is awkward to do.

BUTTERFLY BALLADS

And in turning they dealt
To the dollies such knocks,
That the donkey was wishing them
Back in their box.

The ladies were frightened
The guns might be loaded:
Their bran would be spilt
If the charges exploded.

So the dollies in muslin
Went down on their knees,
And said, "Beautiful soldiers,
Go back, if you please!
Our heads are but wax,
Or the new composition;
Our blood is but bran;
And we fear ammunition."

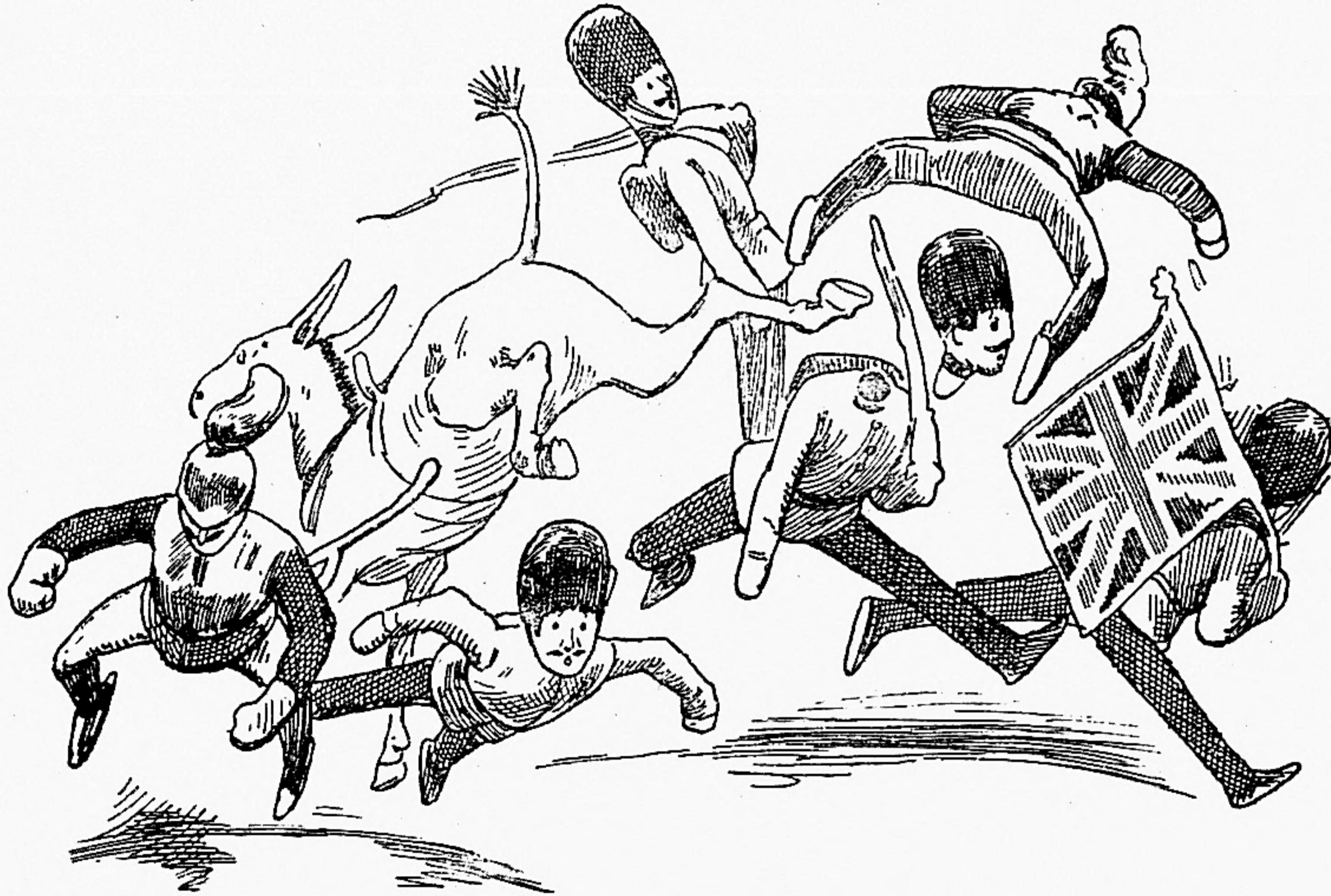
"Oh, fear not! Arise!"
Said the captain, advancing;
"We cannot go back,
For we dearly love dancing.
We left in the box
Spring-cannon and peas;
And nobody fires
Such muskets as these."

The donkey was sorry
To see them persisting ;
With their guns to their shoulders
They still went on twisting.
The dollies were battered,
Their tempers were good :
“ Beg your pardon ! ”—“ My head ! —
Oh, I wish it were wood ! ”

Then the donkey, indignant,
Said, “ This is not right :
I thought that tin soldiers
Were always polite.”
Deserting his partner—
He left her in squeals—
He charged on the army,
And flung out his heels.

He kicked the two captains
In blue and in red
Up over the top
Of the drummer-boy’s head.
The soldiers all ran
At the sound of his bray,
Crying, “ Quick—for your lives !
He is coming this way ! ”

They beat a retreat
In a series of leaps,
And into the barracks
They tumbled in heaps.
The barracks they covered,
And safely they hid,
With a fine battle picture
Outside on the lid.



Oh, well-a-day ! well-a-day !
What happened more ?
The dolls in a circle
Fell flat on the floor ;
They fainted and lay
Like a white muslin star,
And the organ played "Tooral-
A-looral !" afar.

Then Neddy uplifted them,
 Big ones and small,
And put them all sitting,
 Propped up by the wall—
All in a row,
 And exceedingly weak;
And each one revived
 With a sigh and a squeak.

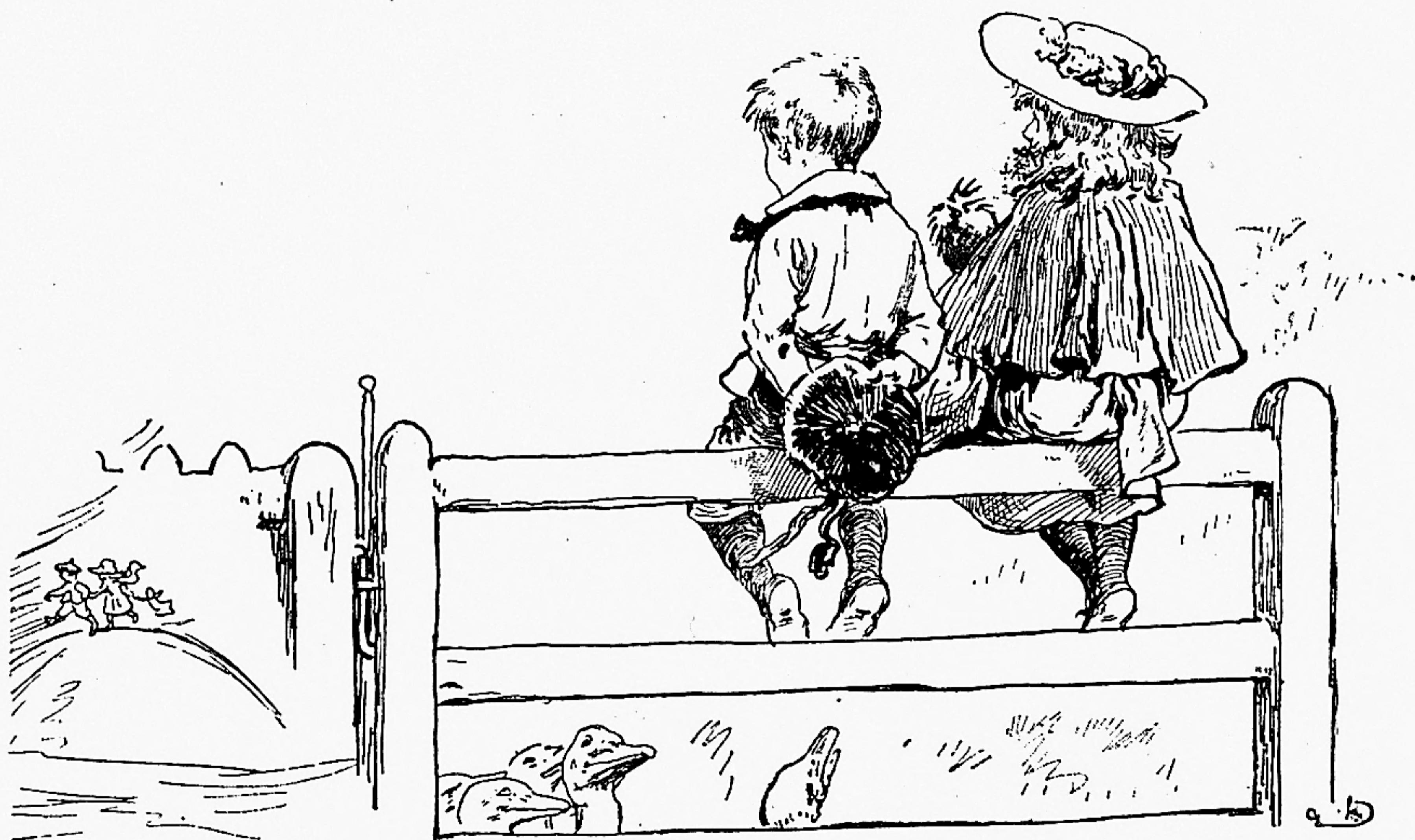
Then voices and footsteps
 Were heard drawing nigh:
The children are coming—
 Said Neddy, "Good-bye."
He put on his panniers,
 He took his place quick
On his little green stand—
 But the glue would not stick.

The children came running.
 "Who put the dolls here?"
"Was it you?"—"Was it you?"
 "Well, isn't it queer?"
The youngest was crying,
 A toy in his hand:
"My lovely new donkey
 Is off of his stand!"

Don't cry and don't puzzle,
For tea-time is soon ;
And it's better to dance
On a wet afternoon.
So dance with the poker,
And dance with the tongs,
And sing with the kettle
The sweetest of songs !

The Edge of the World

LITTLE Tommy Toozle sat upon a gate,
Golden summer morning, only half-past eight ;



Sitting up beside him, little sister Sue
Said, "Whatever, ever, ever shall we do?"
Ducks and geese below them cackled in a row—
"Oh ! wherever, ever, ever shall we go ?"

Little Tommy Toozle opened big blue eyes,
And he saw the distance circled with the skies ;
And he said, " My Susie, come along with me,
And the edge, the very edge, of the world we'll see.
Come along, my Susie, walking hand in hand,
On the edge, the very edge, of the world we'll stand."



Off they set, and scampered by the fields of grain ;
Up the stile and over, all along the lane ;
Past the little gardens where the chickens scratch ;
Past the little houses, white and roofed with thatch ;
Past the pretty orchards, snowy blossoms nigh—
Yet they saw the distance circled with the sky.



"The Edge of the World."

Oh! where did they go to, little Tom and Sue?
Did they reach the distance, where the hills are blue?
Did they come at nightfall to the long dark edge?
What was there—a railing, or a wall or hedge?
Or was there no railing—did they shrink in fear?
Did she say, “Oh, Tommy! don’t you go too near!”

Did they kneel together, to the edge to creep,
Hand in hand lean over, just to take a peep?
Did they see the wonders of that awful place,
And the endless outlook into stars and space?
Did it frighten Susie, timid little rover?
And the thoughtless Tommy, did he tumble over?

If he tumbled over from the great world’s edge,
What was there to stop him—any shelf or ledge?
Nothing, nothing, nothing! Down he must have gone,
While his sister Susie with a scream looked on:
Saw him disappearing swiftly as a shot,
Down into the distance, like a speck or spot.

Well—they never reached it! Little sister Sue
Had a nasty pebble hurting in her shoe;
And her brother Tommy said, “Let’s go back now:
There are wasps about us, and here comes a cow!”
So they trotted homeward, fast as they could go,
And the ducks to meet them waddled in a row.

Little Tommy Toozle said to sister Sue,
" Well, we might have got there—only for your shoe."
" No," said sister Susie, " we should be there now,
Sitting on the world's edge, only for that cow."



Happy little dunces! Why, the world's a ball;
You may travel round it, and find no edge at all!

An Insect

Before.

Crawl, crawl,
Up the wall,
Hairy worm,
With stretch and squirm;
Poor little insect, slow and small.

Crawl, crawl,
And if you fall
Roll up tight in a hairy ball.

May you go safe from thoughtless boys
To your little life, your summer joys;

May it be soon,
When the woods are in tune,
And the belted bees are humming—
May it be soon,
The happy day that is coming!

After.

Flutter by,
Butterfly ;
Speck of light,
Flower in flight !

We are altered—you and I—

Treading low,
See me go,

While you rise and sparkle so.

Go, my little friend, and free,
Live your life of jubilee.

Go ; farewell, to-night you sleep
In palace of a blossom deep.

Go untouched, dear butterfly—
Good-bye!—good-bye !

Dancing

Do you know how they danced the gavotte—

Do you know?—Do you know?

It was stately and grand, was it not?

Long ago—long ago!

Solemnly advancing, gliding,

(One and two, and three and four!)

Satin slippers softly sliding

On the polished floor.

Oh! there was an art for learning

In the bows and curtseys slow,

Fingers meeting, figures turning,

Long and long ago!

Smiling lips and drooping lashes,

(One and two, and three and four!)

Very high they tied their sashes,

Roses fresh they wore,

Step by step they came advancing,
Holding out their skirts—just so—
While the gallants led the dancing,
Long and long ago!

*And the beautiful old minuet—
Tell me how did it seem.*

If you saw it, you'd never forget—
Such a dream, such a dream!

Touch the spinet, play the viol,
Timing all to three and three.
Oh! 'twas sweet beyond denial—
Old-world melody.

Waxen lights were clustered, shining
On the dancers circling round,
Parting, meeting, hands entwining,
Curtseying to the ground.

Dainty paces, little graces,
Figures swaying (one, two, three!)
Powdered hair and pretty faces—
Fair as you could see.
So they danced in graceful measures,
And in courtly dress arrayed,
Sparkling with their jewelled treasures
And their flowered brocade.

And now will you tell me, my dear,

How the dancing is done?

"My birthday!—a party last night;

 Oh yes, and such fun!

"There was waltzing. Boys can't do it—

 They want blind-man's-buff instead.

Tommy said, 'I wish I knew it,'

 Knocked my knees, and bumped my head.

One, two, three, he took me twirling

 In three skips across the floor,

Till we tumbled with the whirling,

 And sat against the door.

"Cousin Jack—he's great at boating—

 Came and picked me up, quite vexed ;

Seized my waist, and I went floating

 Off with him the next.

Cousin Jack is strong and clever,

 But I never knew before,

One can waltz and hardly ever

 Touch against the floor.

"Then quadrilles. My partner blundered—

 Asked me always what to do ;

Afterwards I really wondered

 How I ever pulled him through.

Oh, those boys! Past recognising
Are the jackets that they wear,
Gloves and ties all white—surprising,
And their tidy hair.

“ Well, we had a set of lancers
All mixed up—such fun, you know :
Turning, visiting, the dancers
Four advancing in a row;
Our grand chain was such confusion,
But at supper all went right :
I won’t make the least allusion
To Tommy’s appetite.

“ Then Sir Roger and the fiddle,
All so merry, face to face,
Partners whirling down the middle,
And backward to their place;
Hands across the archway ending,
Hurry scurry, two and two,
Running hand in hand and bending
As they all went through.”

*So at eight or at ten now-a-days
They would say—would they not?
Too slow are those old-fashioned ways,
Minuet and gavotte.*

The Fat Little Fish

THERE was a little fish, and he swam about the pond
As proud as a shark or a whale;
And he winked his little eyes, and he snapped at little flies,
And he wriggled, and he wagged with his tail.

This funny little fish was the

fattest in the pond,

And his silvery tail was long,

But a boy came down from the

house beyond—

And that boy is

the subject of

my song.

For the boy had a

hook and a rod

and a line,

And he watched above on the bank,

And said, "It is clear there is fine sport here!"

For the little bubbles rose and sank.



The little fat fish looked up and up,
 He looked through the waters high;
And he said, "Oh, dear! I very much fear
 He will take me home to fry!"

For the boy on the bank was a chubby boy,
 And a neat little line had he,
And he whistled and sang in his pride and joy,
 "Here's very fine sport for me!"

"I am a fisherman, brave and bold!
 It is better than any play
To swing my rod from the grassy sod,
 And catch a dozen a day.

"To catch a dozen a day, my boys—
 In a week that is seventy-two;
And that for a year . . . ? I have no slate,
 And the sum is long to do.

"But oh, what fun, when the day is done,
 To smooth their silvery scales,
And to pack them in rows, their heads and toes!—
 I mean, their heads and tails.

"Then home will I go, and my whistle blow,
And they all will welcome me,
A fisherman brave from the ocean wave,
And fish from the stormy sea.

"And I'll catch a dozen every day,
And thousands every year;
And we shan't care a button for beef and mutton,
And the butcher will disappear.

"And the nice little
fish will be all
on a dish
For dinner every
day."

But, alas! for his song,
for the wind was
strong,
And the rod and the
line flew away.



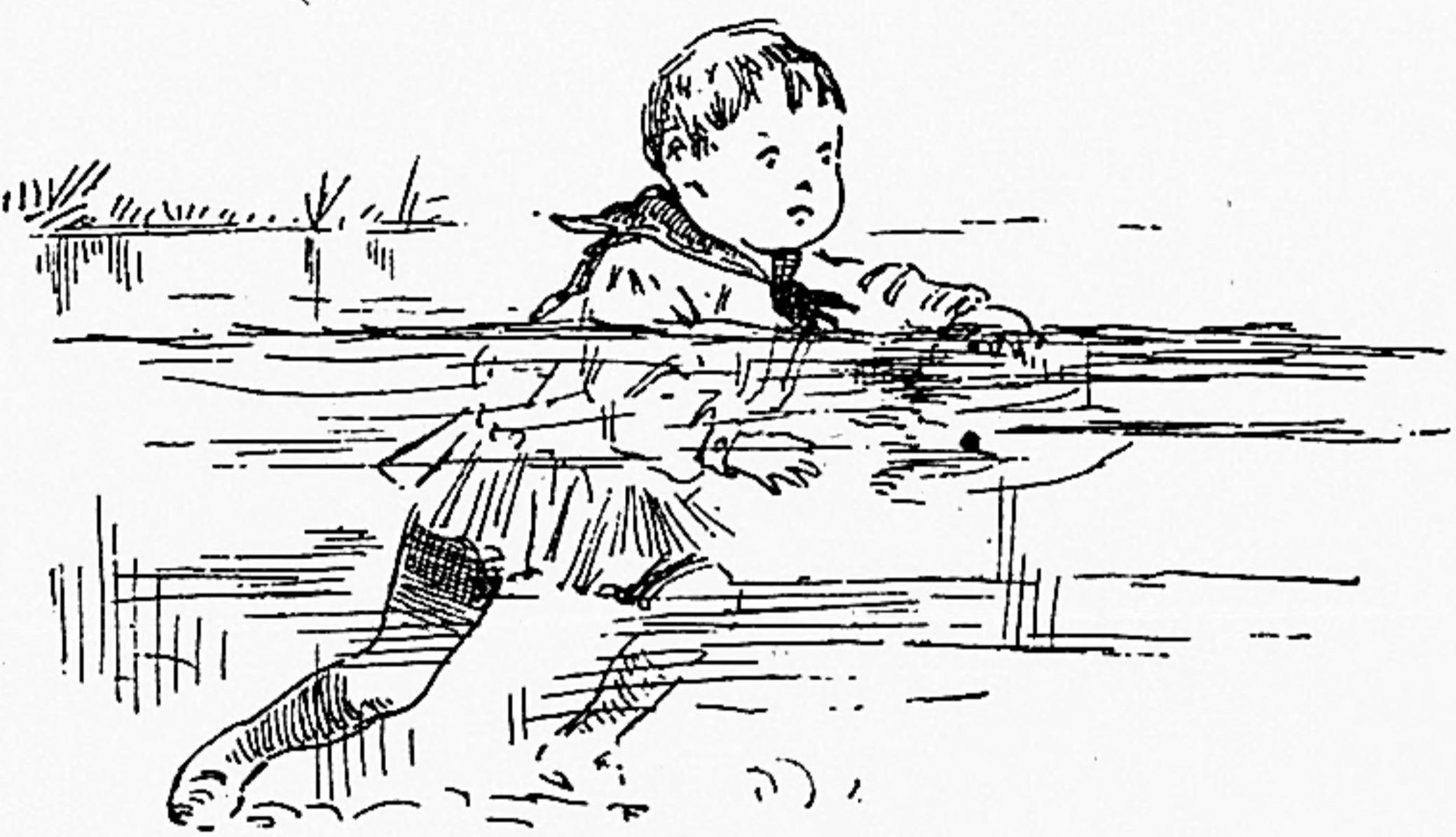
The merry little boy, the chubby little boy,
Stood still awhile to think,
And then on the bank he carefully sank,
And slid along down to the brink.

His toes went in, he cared not a pin,
 He never stopped or stayed;
 For drifting about was the rod far out,
 And he thought it fun to wade.

The water came up above
 his shoes

As he followed his
 plaything's track;
 It was up to his waist
 —said he, "I'll make
 haste—

It is lost if I go back."



Evelyn Hardy

The mud was slimy, the
 water strong,
 The ripples danced for
 play,
 And his heels went up,
 and his head went
 down,
 And his feet went
 floating away.

The funny little fish went round and round,
 And a merry little fish was he,
 And he said, with a wink, "I almost think
 The sport is all for me."

They caught no fish that summer day,
They caught no fish whatever;
But out they fished the chubby boy,
Who thought himself so clever.

So the little fat fish went swimming round.
“Oh, very fine sport!” he said;
“The fisherman bold came tumbling in,
And they took him home to bed.”



The Wishing Vase

MASTER MINNO was small—why, no size at all—and yet he climbed over the schoolmaster's wall; and, finding an ass without saddle or bridle, he went off like a shot, at a trot—why not?—for Minimus (otherwise Minno) was idle.

Young Master Minimus lived long ago—a couple of thousand years or so; but boys were boys, with their scrapes and joys, just the same then as now, you know. Just the same!—with praise and blame, good resolutions, the tear that tickles, and the very next day more grievous pickles. Just the same!—they made quite as much racket in tunic and sandals instead of boots, as ever they do in modern suits, with a turn-down collar and an Eton jacket.

In Roman schools they learned to write with a *stylus* or point on tablets white—tablets of wax; and it was such fun, before the half of a copy was done, to hold the wax tablet up in the sun, and to watch the schoolmaster's dire dismay when the whole of the copy-book melted away.

Now Master Minno, the day before, had melted his lessons all over the floor—the marble floor of the schoolhouse court. He thought his mischief was very fine sport. But the master

told him, to his great sorrow, he should do a double share to-morrow. So you know the reason why to-day Minno played truant and rode away.

He rode away on that ancient ass, till it kicked and tossed him into the grass, where he lay in the sunshine with poppy and daisy; and he rolled to the edge of a nice little pool, and said, "Oh dear! I wish I was cool!" And he stopped there, baking and broiling, and lazy.

The sky was blue, the boy was brown; his reflection looked up, and he looked down. To himself he said, "I am so hot, I'll dip my head—why should I not?" But when he tried, he yelled and cried; it was such a shock—that knock—he thought he would have died. For the pool among the summer grass was not water at all, but looking-glass—yes, looking-glass—quicksilver backed it, and banging his head he nearly cracked it.

He was groaning and moaning, and sitting and rocking, and saying, "My head!—Oh, that was shocking! I wish I had known it wasn't a pool! Oh dear! I wish I had gone to school!"—when all at once he stared in fear, for, like a trap-door opening up from a floor, the side of the mirror was rising in a manner most surprising; and in the opening he saw appear the head of an old man, a wizard or seer, who asked: "What's the matter, for goodness' sake? Don't knock so loud, or my glass will break."

Two thousand years ago or more, it was very strange, this looking-glass door, round and sound and set in the ground, as

strange a thing as ever was found. For in those days they had queer ways ; and one of the queerest was being furnished with metal mirrors, polished or burnished, which were apt to be dark and dull and cloudy, and to make one look what girls call “dowdy.” They might have been bright for an emperor’s sight—a palace mirror—with money to spare; but as for the classes and citizen masses, how could they ever have done their hair? And as for *togas* and classical clothes, how they wore them so gracefully nobody knows; for, not having a large glass with quicksilver at the back of it, it must have been hard to put on a *toga* without making a sack of it.

Well, after this digression, which serves to prove the wizard’s profession (for he knew of looking-glass well enough—as well as he probably knew of snuff)—after this, to go on with our story, he put up his head, and his beard was hoary, and he wore a hood and a garment grey, and he said, “I am very busy to-day; still, lest my mirror you might shatter, I came up to ask, What *can* be the matter?”

“Alas! alas! I bumped my head. I wish I’d gone to school instead.”

Said the wizard, “To bump your head is bad. Is there anything else you wish, my lad?”

“Oh yes! I wish no school existed!”

The wizard heard; his beard he twisted, with one lean hand all bony and thin, and stroked it downward from his chin. He did not speak one word of blame, but sadly sighed, “They’re all the same! They are discontented at

nine or ten, wishing until they are old, old men. Well, well! What else do you wish to-day? Is there anything else—in a small way?"

"Yes—heaps!" said the boy. "I wish I had money, a boat, white mice, and bread and honey."

"Anything more? Go on, and say."

"Yes—I wish it was always a holiday. I wish I was grown up—five feet ten. I wish I was king over other men. I wish I had horses, and dogs, and ships, and could travel to Athens in three skips. I wish I was great, and wise, and clever. And I think I should like to live for ever."

At last the old gentleman shook his head, drew round his face his hood's grey border, and merely said, with twinkling eyes, that, considering the boy's size, such wishes were a large order.

Then Minno, to his great wonder, saw the glass door raised, and steps were under. Catching sight of that flight of beautiful steps all polished and white, he asked, "What's below? I'd like to know."

That peculiar old gentleman dressed in grey held up the trap-door and said, "Come this way!" But the boy on the stairs, unawares, trod on his gown and went sliding down; tripping and slipping, he rolled down straight, till he stopped before an ivory gate.

Walking down slowly, the sage came too, unlocked the gate, and they passed through.

Down below was a firelight glow—caves furnished wherever

one chose to go : seats with covers of lion-skin, great brown jars to stand bulrushes in, golden candlesticks, couches with springs, and several other valuable things, such as Eastern brass-work, mats and rugs, china and bric-à-brac, mugs and jugs. The old gentleman lived in this furnished rockery, and spent all his time in making crockery.

Like all boys, Minno thought it fun to see how anything was done. So he watched a jar from the beginning : saw how the potter's wheel went spinning, with a lumpy jar of clay in the middle, smooth and changing, soft to the sight—and not a bit right ; and how to shape it—that was the riddle.

The wheel went round with a whirring sound, and the jar was turning, turning, turning, as fast as the wind or a railway express. And wherever the sage pressed his finger or hand, as the surface went past, spinning so fast, he made a hollow, or rim, or band ; or he pricked with a point, and it made a line : and so he finished the whole design.

Then, telling the boy to follow, he carried the jar to a hollow, or very hot oven, down under the fire. "Sit there," said he, "while this is baking. Sit still—no talking, and no shaking ; and you shall have your heart's desire. Sit still and wait, for I have toiled, and all in the firing may be spoiled ; for it's quite a lottery, this making of pottery."

The boy sat still—so stiff and still, he felt his very hair to grow. The wizard held his finger up : the boy got cramps, the hours went slow. The boy was sitting on his leg, with "pins

and needles" in his feet:—a cosy rug, the place was snug—but oh, the cramps! and oh, the heat!

At last the wizard, looking wise, called out, "Arise! The vase is baked; the vase is good."

The boy said, "Oh, I wish I could! My foot's asleep; I cannot stir. Oh! lift, lift me, gentle sir."

The sage was ready, strong and willing: he raised poor Minno from the floor. "I never sat so still before," the boy said; "it was simply killing."

Then slowly, slowly cooled the vase. They watched it for three mortal hours. "Go, fill and drink," the wizard said; "the Wishing Vase has magic powers. No, no, my boy, not up the stair; you'll break it, if you don't take care. Go straight along the other way."

So Minno, passing through the caves, found pleasant streams with crystal waves, and meadows in the light of day. (And, of course, before he left the sage, with politeness wonderful for his age, he said to the potter,—or wizard disguised as such,—"Thank you, sir; thank you: thanks very much.")

Now, filling the jar at a streamlet's brink, before he raised it up to drink, he saw that the water had caused to appear four lines of words printed large and clear: on the side of the vase they showed that minute, and were only visible when there was water in it. When Minno saw this, he was glad, for once, that he had gone to school instead of being a dunce; for, though the schoolmaster was now at a distance, he was only a

quarter of an hour or so—very creditable that, you know—reading four lines without any assistance.

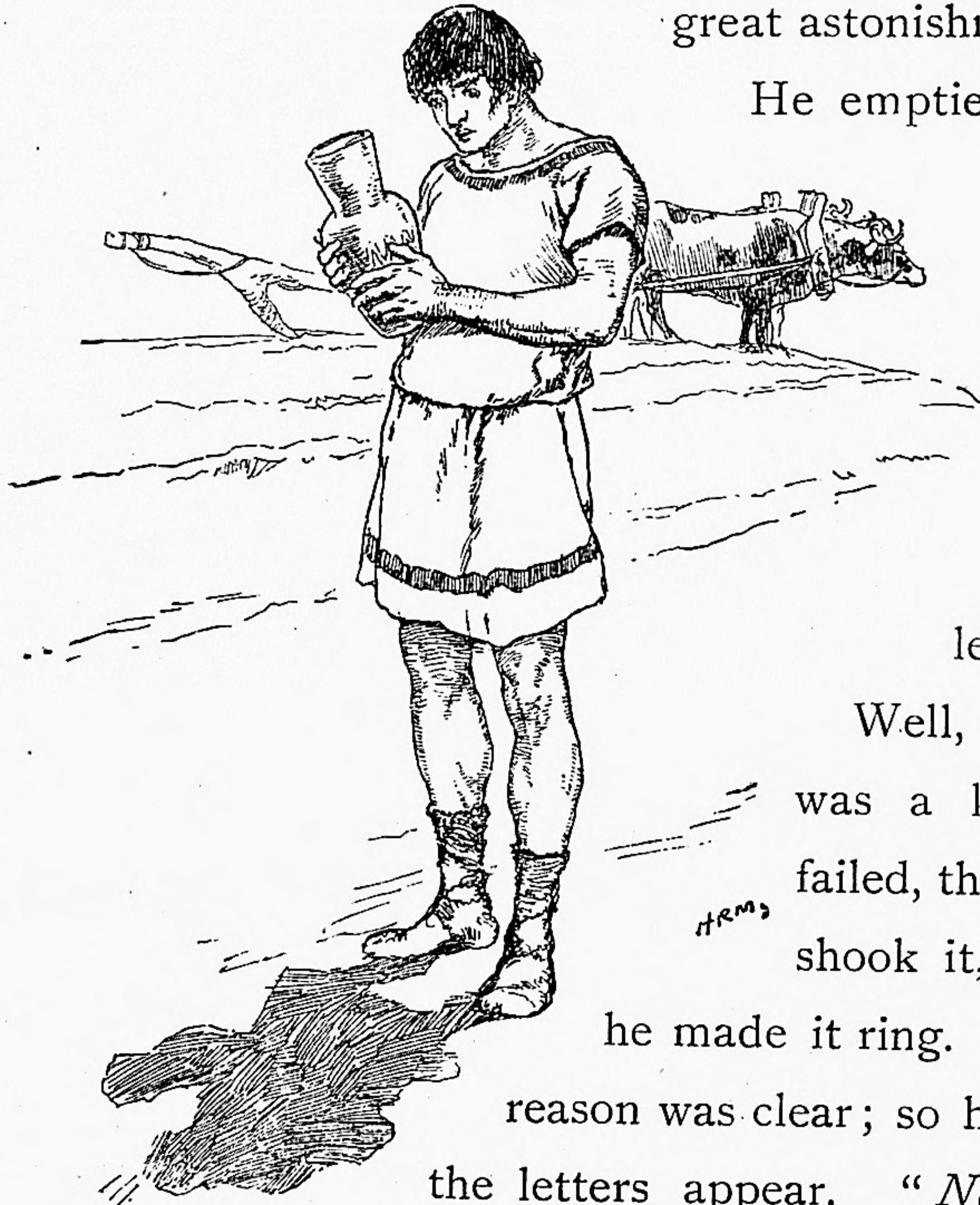
In this vase there lies a charm:

Wish no evil, hurt, or harm.

Wish with care:

Wish, and beware.

“Hurrah!” said the boy. “I’ll try if I can! I wish I was grown to be a man.” And the moment he took a sup, to his great astonishment he grew up.



He emptied the vase on the sands, and gazed at it in his hands. And, now that it was empty, he found it quite blank, with no letters round it.

Well, next he wished he was a king; but the vase failed, though he took it and shook it, and knocked it till he made it ring. It was empty: the reason was clear; so he filled it, and made the letters appear. “Now I want to be a king—do you hear?”

The moment he drank he perceived his rank, for his vesture

turned a glorious red, and he felt a crown on the top of his head. Where he was king of he could not determine, but he certainly carried a sceptre and crown ; and as for the edge of his royal gown, it was trimmed all round with most beautiful ermine.

He was Minimus before ; but now he was "little" no more ; so, as his fate had made him great, a grand new name came into his head—he would be King Maximus instead.

He was not, of course, the same as the emperor of that name. In fact, it's a mystery that he is not mentioned in history ; but in lesson-books there are kings galore, without our wanting any more. So we may be thankful and not perplexed, and just go on to what happened next.

The courtiers soon rode round that way, and he mounted his horse—a prancing bay. And they made a splendid cavalcade, in royal purple and gold arrayed, all dressed in their best, with lances in rest, and everyone carried a shining shield ; and the king, as well as he could, concealed the fact that he never had mounted a horse till that wonderful day on the spirited bay (for you know he only rode donkeys before). But now, in a fright at the unusual height, and the prancing and dancing, he held on tight, till at last they got home to the palace door.

And there he reigned in state and splendour, amid the homage of young and old. The palace dinner was always tender ; the palace plates were all of gold. The palace was built of marble white, and the throne was of ivory cushioned

with red. The king wore his crown from morning till night, and he took it off when he went to bed.

Amongst his courtiers appeared one day our friend the wizard, dressed in grey. With a sorrowful look his finger he shook. "It was all very well to try the spell ; but it's very wrong when people go out, and leave a Wishing Vase lying about."

The king remembered what a mistake his hurry had caused him to make ; for that day, when the courtiers came to find him, he had mounted and left the Vase behind him.

Said the sage, "Your subjects may wish and rue it, when it is too late to undo it."

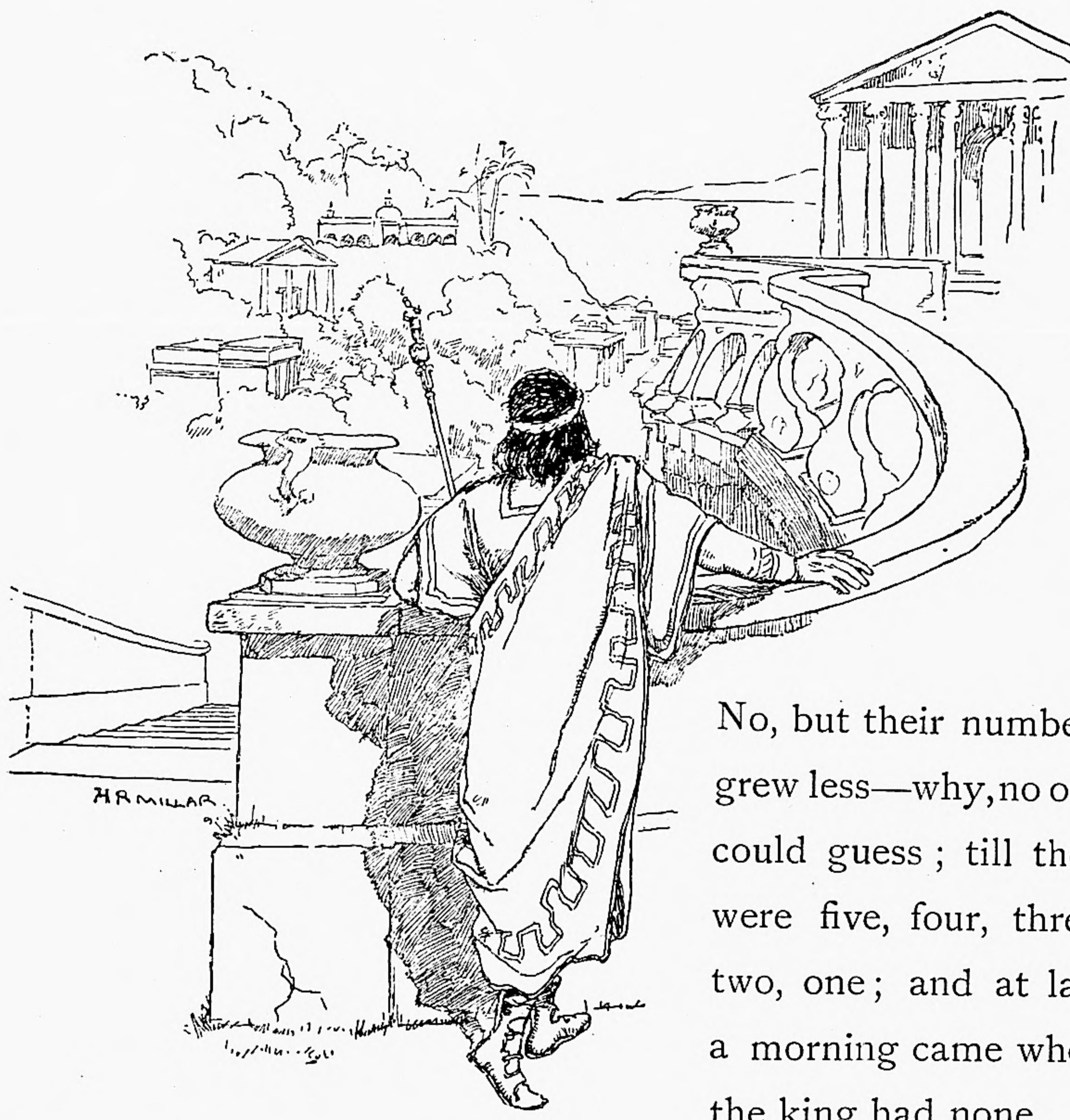
Said the king, "Cease, interfering stranger ! There's not the slightest danger. My subjects wish for nothing whatever, because I am perfectly good and clever."

Said the sage, "That sentiment sounds conceited, and should not be repeated. Alas, my king, the world is wide—and few are satisfied. And—listen!—in this world of ours, wisely limited are our powers, for in our selfishness and blindness we might wish evil and unkindness."

Said the king, "I don't like this sort of thing. That's the way the schoolmaster used to talk. Would one of my courtiers kindly take this old gentleman for a walk ?"

The sage, with uncommon activity for his age, went out of the place at a quick pace, which accelerated into a race ; and the page gave chase in velvet and lace, and fell on his face, which was really a disgrace, considering the racers' respective ages : but he was the fattest of pampered pages.

Now the king perceived, every day at dinner, that the number of his courtiers was growing thinner. That is not to say that their looks fell off from day to day, or that they refused mutton on Monday because they had turkey on Sunday.



No, but their numbers grew less—why, no one could guess ; till they were five, four, three, two, one; and at last a morning came when the king had none.

No one to be found—not a porter in the palace yard, not a soldier to go on guard, not a cook in the kitchens underground. The king went out, and wandered about, up and down through a deserted town. What was the use of crown and throne, if he was left alone?

He had not walked very far, till he saw on the street, baking brown in the heat, the Wishing Jar! Now, since he got up, he had not tasted bit or sup, having no servants to get him even a plate or a cup. So he took the Vase to a fountain's brink, and filled it to drink. When the inscription began to appear, he was too angry for caution or fear. Though he read there, "*Wish with care : Wish, and beware,*" he was thinking how his courtiers were fickle to have left him in such a pickle. "Here I am—hungry, and thirsty, and heated. Was ever a king so badly treated? Those knaves are guilty of treason, without any reason; and I wish the whole lot were beheaded or shot!"

That very minute, dropping the Jar with the water in it, he went flying up into the sky double quick—up like a rocket, and down like the stick.

But where he fell I cannot tell ; 'tis neither known to me nor you. He was sent, so to speak, into the middle of next week, or to Jericho or Timbuctoo. And, expressing his objections very loud, he fell down there in the middle of a crowd.

There were his courtiers of all ages, from the Lord Chancellor down to the pages. And there had all his army come, from the General down to the boy with the drum. And there were his people, moaning and groaning, from my Lord and my Lady, with silks to adorn her, down to the cobbler whose shop was round the corner.

They had wished with the Wishing Vase, one by one, and all their good fortune had been undone. For after a very few ambitious wishes which came true, there had always come to

mind something cruel, covetous, or unkind ; and the moment they wished harm, behold, the working of the charm ! —each in turn was shot into space, and they fell on their feet in this far-off place.

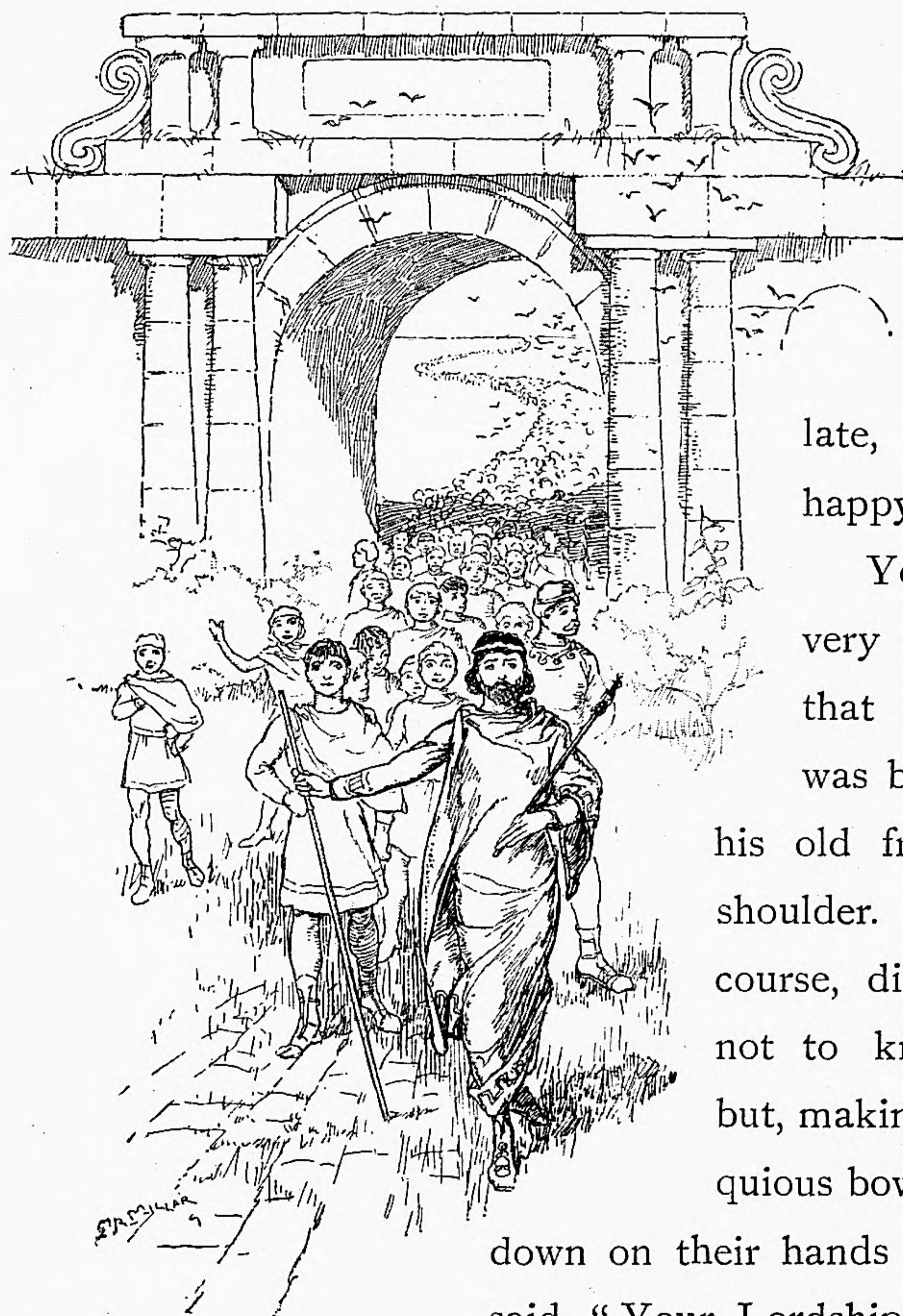
The first two said, “ How do you do ? How did you come ? Here’s my wife — how absurd ! ”

And the lady arriving, made a third. Then came a fourth, and five, six, seven ; and eight, nine, ten, and eleven. And at last they came flocking ; and it was shocking to think how, as soon as their wishes were granted, something hard and unkind was the next thing they wanted. The king himself was as bad as the rest—for he wished them all shot, did he not ? — and the instant his wish was expressed, here he was, with the whole selfish crew, gone to Jericho or Timbuctoo.

But, as misfortune makes us kind, he said, “ My friends, you have not dined ; ” and, fraternising with the cobbler and all the others, he treated them as long-lost brothers.



And, seeing the wizard coming afar, he said, "Oh, there's the extremely gifted gentleman that made the Jar! Let us go down on our hands and knees and say, "Your Lordship, if you



please, will you waft us back across the seas, and give us, if it be not too late, our former happy state?"

You see, this was very different from that day when he was bolder and gave his old friend the cold shoulder. The king, of course, did not pretend not to know him now, but, making a most obsequious bow, they all went down on their hands and knees and said, "Your Lordship, if you please, if it be not too late, *could* you restore us to our former happy state?"

The sage, with a smile at his little joke, took the Wishing Vase from under his cloak, and gave them a

sup all round, and then threw it on the ground—and it broke!

And, by asking for their former happy state, the king expected to lead the crowd, all very proud and cheering aloud, back to his city through the marble gate.

And lo! the happy state was granted—but not at all what these people wanted. No longer banished, the crowd vanished, and the spell was finished, and the king diminished; without sceptre or crown, he was lying down, just a little boy from school, by a looking-glass pool.

Minno sat up with his knuckles in his eyes, and raised a succession of dolorous cries.

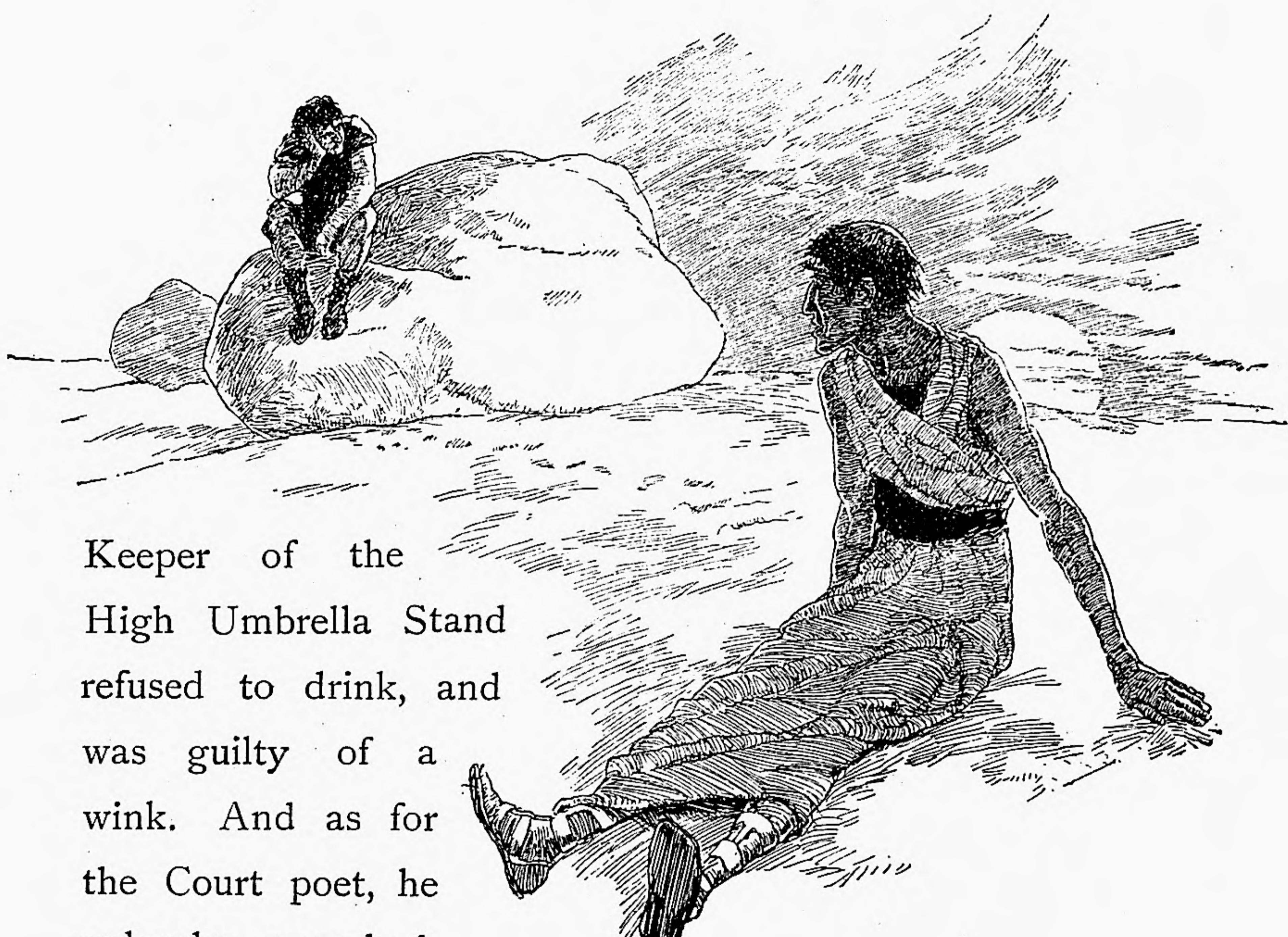
“Stop that!” said the sage. “What a howl for a boy of your age! You little goose, it’s no use. To get all one wishes for, my lad, might only make one unhappy and bad. For in this world of ours, wisely limited are our powers; or we, in our selfishness and blindness, might work evil and unkindness. But perhaps I had better not talk, or you may request me to take a walk.”

The boy blushed, and rushed to embrace the seer, with many apologies.

“Now go to school and learn all the ‘ologies. You wanted a holiday, you tried to snatch it, and I hope, for your good, you’ll be found out and ‘catch it.’”

Meanwhile two—only two—of all the exiled crew had refused the last sup from the wizard’s Wishing Cup. They said, “He has a meaning that we see through,” and they stuck

to their resolve—they did!—like glue. One was a shepherd, become quite grand, as Lord of the High Umbrella Stand. And the other, who had kept donkeys for hire, fancying himself full of poetic fire, had wished to be poet laureate. Neither of these wanted to go back to their former state. The



Keeper of the
High Umbrella Stand
refused to drink, and
was guilty of a
wink. And as for
the Court poet, he
vulgarly remarked,
“Not if I know it!”

So they were left behind. Perhaps they changed their mind. It was enough to tire them, to be sitting on the sand for a whole fortnight with nobody to admire them.

And now, to finish Minno’s story—after all his dream of glory, he was only a boy once more—a truant lad with trouble

in store, shrinking with a nameless dread from the unpleasant necessity of going home to bed.

Oh ! slowly, slowly home that night the truant went in fear and fright, and entered from the moonlit street. His sandals were not on his feet, but softly in his arms folded. I'm glad they caught him all the same, for he was very much to blame. I warrant you that he was scolded. "Young sir, you slept beside a pool all day, instead of going to school." And how could he deny it ? And when he spoke of the wizard hoary, they said, " Oh ! what a naughty story ! No nonsense now—don't try it ! "

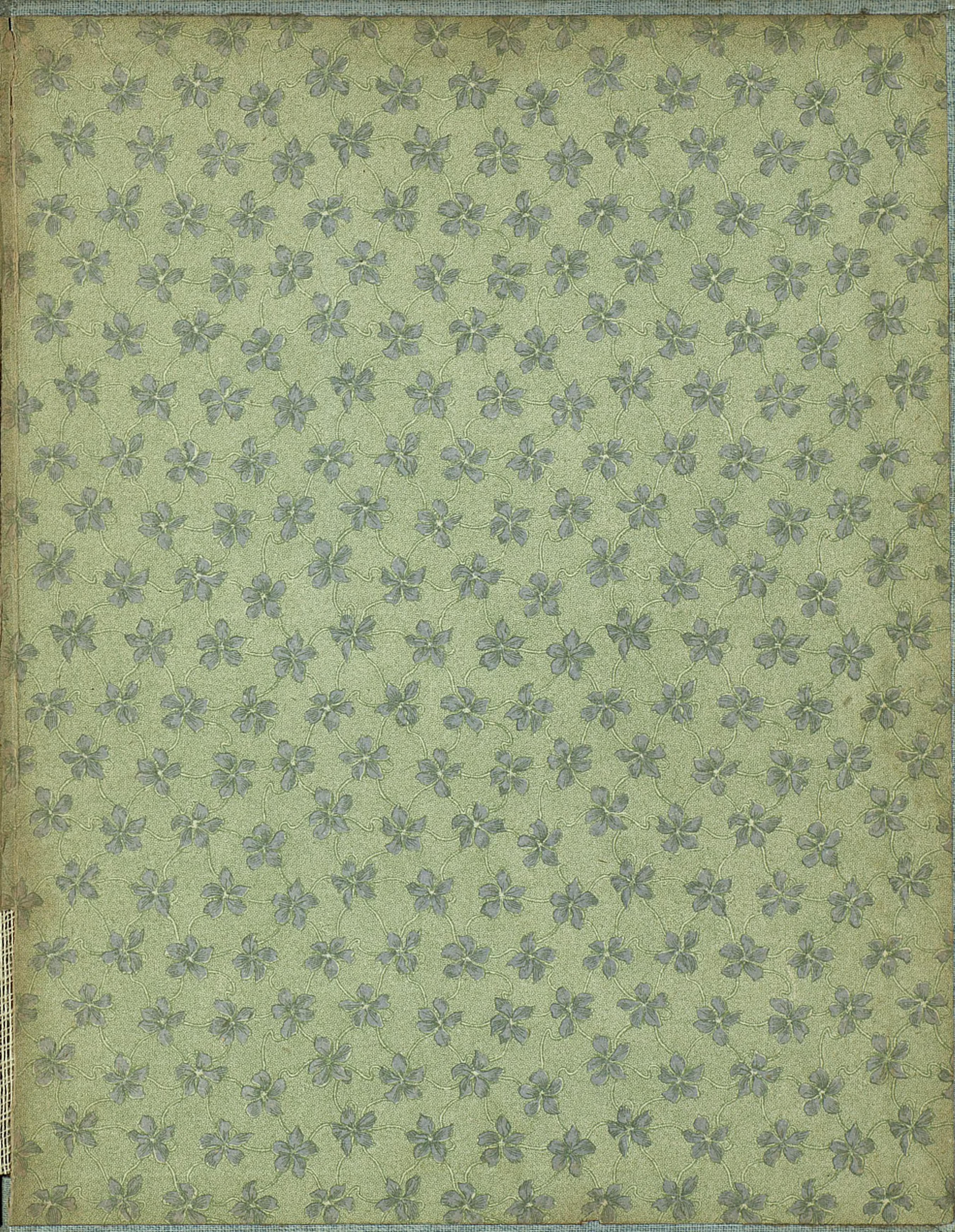
So grievous punishment o'ertook him. He tried to speak : they slapped and shook him. And supperless he slept that night. And, on the whole, it served him right.

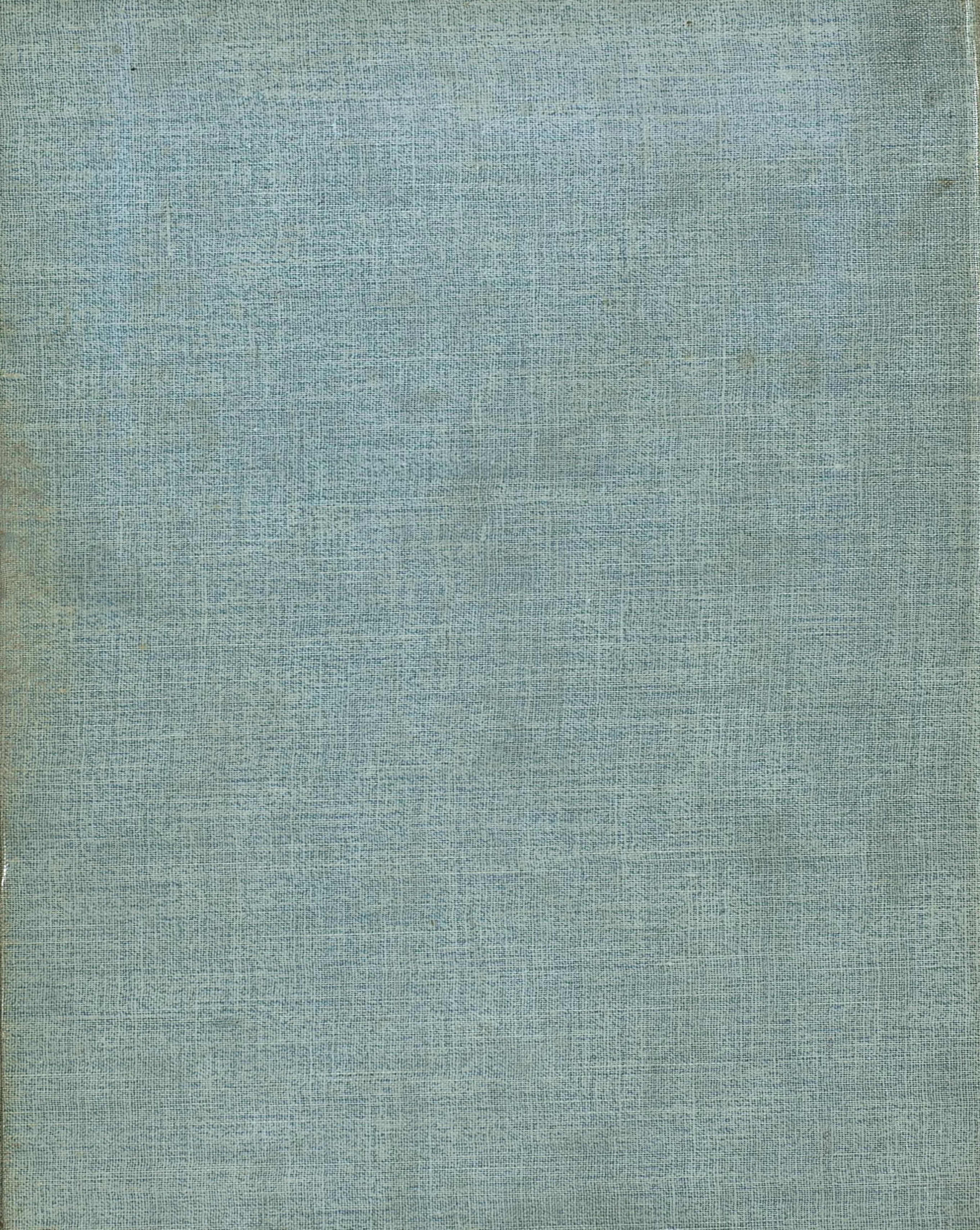




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